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CHRONICLES

OF

BOW STREET POLICE-OFFICE.

VOL. II.

LONDON:  
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CHRONICLES  
OF  
BOW STREET POLICE-OFFICE

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF ·

*THE MAGISTRATES, "RUNNERS," AND  
POLICE;*

AND

A SELECTION OF THE MOST INTERESTING CASES.

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD, F.S.A.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON—CHAPMAN AND HALL,  
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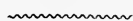
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# CHRONICLES

OF

## BOW STREET POLICE-OFFICE.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### A STRANGE EPISODE.

##### § *The Love of Science Illustrated.*

NOTHING in our time could approach the grotesque horror of the following. In September, 1839, Sir Richard Birnie had before him a singular case illustrating the ardour of medical enthusiasm, and which went so far as to sacrifice the decencies of natural affection and relationship, as in the instance of Mrs. Gamp, "for the benefit of science." The Vicar of Hendon, Mr. Williams, attended to complain of an outrage in the churchyard that was under his charge. Mr. Holm, he said, was the father of one of the defendants, and came to his house, and, after inquiring what tithes witness would require from a botanical garden which his son was about to establish at Hendon, he proceeded to state that his son (the defendant) was quite an

enthusiast in the science of phrenology. They were parting in a friendly manner, when Mr. Holm observed, that he had a daughter, who had died within a day or two, and he wished her to be buried on the Saturday following. Mr. Holm said that he was a relation of Mrs. Haley, and the body was to be interred in the family vault. On the Thursday afternoon, witness walked to the churchyard, and the clerk informed him that Mr. Holm had requested to have the vault opened on the Friday, the day before the funeral was to take place. He told the clerk that he would not consent to the vault being opened before the day of interment, without a faculty was obtained by the parties from Doctors' Commons for the purpose. On the Friday afternoon, when he (witness) returned from London to Hendon, he was met by Mr. Holm, sen., and his son, the defendant, and the former introduced the latter to him as his son. Mr. Holm, sen., said he was sorry that he (witness) would not allow him to open the vault in the morning, and assured him, on the honour of a gentleman, that his sole object in wishing the vault to be opened the day before the interment of his daughter, was to enable them to collect some scattered bones of their relatives deceased, and to put them into a decent form; and he (witness) told him, that if their object was merely so to do, he would give orders to the clerk to have the vault opened two hours before the time appointed for the interment of his

daughter, and he would have quite sufficient time and opportunity to do what he wished. He gave orders to the clerk to have the vault opened early on the Saturday morning, but he expressly enjoined him that he must not, on any account, permit any of the coffins to be touched; and if it should be attempted, to come and inform him instantly. About two o'clock on the Saturday he received information from one of his servants that the heads of two or more bodies in the vault had been cut off. He went instantly to the churchyard, and saw the defendant Wood, the bricklayer, standing by the gate near the churchyard. He asked Wood how he dared to touch any coffin in the churchyard, and to assist in the removal of two or three heads from the coffins? Wood replied that it was not he who had done it, but Mr. Henry Holm, for he (Wood) had only opened the vault as a bricklayer. "I have nothing further to state," said the witness, "excepting that, on my return to Hendon, I saw the defendant Charsley in the churchyard, and I asked him how he could possibly have been so wicked as to assist in such a shameful outrage. He replied that he had been incautiously led into it by Mr. Wood, and that he (Wood) had taken a hatchet and clove open the leaden coffin; that he (Charsley) then got a chisel, and with it forced open the other two coffins."

Mrs. Holm, whose body had been disinterred, and whose head had been cut off, was mother to Mr. Henry Holm now present.

*Sir R. Birnie*: "What! did he cut off the head of his own mother?" The witness replied in the affirmative, and Mr. Harmer admitted the fact.

Another witness deposed that he saw Mr. Holm open one of the coffins and raise up the corpse, which he supported with an iron brick-cleaver, which he held in his hand. Witness then saw the defendant, as if he was feeling about in the coffin, or it might be cutting something. The defendant then took a head from the coffin, and put it into a bag. He then walked away, taking the bag with him.

Mr. Holm, sen., here stated to the magistrate, that the vault was his own property. The Rev. Mr. Williams said it was not a faculty vault, and the Haley family had an equal claim to the vault.

*Mr. Holm, sen.*: "I know it; my late wife was a Haley, and the vault was built at our expense."

A hair-dresser named Connolly, said he was passing through Hendon Churchyard between seven and eight o'clock, when he saw the defendant Holm remove a shroud from a body, and raise the body up, and support it with something which he held in his hand. Witness saw the defendant Holm hold a knife in his right hand, and cut the head off the dead body. The defendant then removed the skull to the further end of the coffin, and put it into a blue bag. The defendant then came out of the vault and went away, taking the



bag with him. In some time after defendant returned to the vault, and witness saw him take another skull from a coffin, and wipe it with a white handkerchief or napkin which he held in his hand.

The defence offered for this scandal was as extraordinary as the outrage itself. It was argued that the person who had cut his mother's head off was a surgeon possessing great scientific knowledge, an enthusiast in his profession, and ever ardent in the pursuit of scientific acquirements. It was true that he had actually taken the head of his deceased mother (who died in 1809) from her coffin, but when the reason of his having done so was explained, he felt convinced that all the world would acquit him of any criminal act; and, in fact, of anything like a crime. The family of Mr. Holm had, unfortunately, been habitually subjected to a disorder in the head. It was well known to many of the friends of Mr. Holm, that such a disorder was inherent in the family, and the object Mr. Holm had in view in getting possession of the head of the deceased was to enable him to ascertain the cause of the family malady, which he believed he should not only be able to do, by the application of his knowledge of phrenological science, but that he should be able to find some remedy for the disease, and eradicate it from the system of his surviving relations. He could not mean anything like disrespect to the dead, but it was to serve the living, and to extend the benefits of science to man-

kind, that he had violated, though only in appearance, the sanctity of the tomb.

A solicitor, who appeared on behalf of the parish of Hendon, hoped that the magistrate would require heavy bail, as the offence was one of a most heinous nature.

Strange to say, bail was accepted. Great indignation and disgust was felt in the neighbourhood, and the solicitor who appeared for the parish, said it was the intention of the churchwardens and the other parish officers to prosecute the parties at their own expense. No conception could be formed of the state of excitement into which the parish had been thrown. The parties then retired, and Mr. Holm (the father) and Mr. Harmer became securities for the offenders. The same sureties were then offered for the other defendants, and accepted by the magistrates.

## CHAPTER II.

### BOW STREET AND THE PATENT THEATRES.

#### § *The Tailors.*

THERE was a sort of bond between the Bow Street magistrates and the stage; not merely from their having often to deal with disorders in theatres, but from their own actual connection with the "boards." Henry Fielding, as the reader need not be reminded, was a dramatist of importance. Mr. Addington was fond of going behind the scenes. Mr. Const belonged to a jovial club, formed of dramatists and actors, and being unable to attend one of the meetings, reluctantly sent an excuse owing to the sensational case of *Old Patch* then being "on":—

"My dear Sir," he wrote to the cheerful Thomas Dibdin, "in hopes of meeting you yesterday, I have deferred acknowledging the receipt of your kind remembrancer (although as a remembrance it was unnecessary) of Monday next. I hoped I should be able, as usual, to avail myself of your kind invitation; but this villainous *Patch* cannot be removed to any

other day. If I cannot say, with Othello, 'Murder is out of *tune*,' I can swear it is out of *time* on this occasion, which to so musical an ear as mine is just as harsh. *I always thought business a d—d ungentleman-like sort of employment*; but never regretted so much being obliged to attend to it. Should any accident put off the trial, I shall, without ceremony, join you; if not, I can only regret the disappointment.

“FR. CONST.”

Another of these “theatrical” magistrates was Sir Richard Ford, son of the Dr. Ford who was co-manager of Drury Lane Theatre with Sheridan and Linley. He is better known for his connection with Mrs. Jordan.

Mr. Graham was another of the Bow Street magistrates who was partial to the stage. In August, 1805, he was hastily summoned to quell a sort of grotesque riot that broke out in the Haymarket Theatre. Dowton had chosen for his benefit *The Tailors; or, a Tragedy for Warm Weather*, which had many years before been brought forward by Foote. So soon as it was announced, Dowton was assailed by anonymous letters, of which the following is a specimen:—

“August 12th, 1805.

SIR,—We Understand you have Chosen a Afterpiece to Scandalize the Trade, and If you persist in It, It is likely to be Attended with Bad Consequences, there-

fore I would Advise you to Withdraw It, and Subtote Some Other, and you may depend on a Full House.

“ Your humble Servant,

“ A Taylor and Citizen.

“ To Mr. Dowton, No. 7, Charing Cross.”

Dowton, with a proper spirit, disregarded this insolent menace, and determined to proceed.

“ Early in the afternoon, an immense crowd, chiefly consisting of tailors, assembled in the vicinity of the theatre, and when the doors were opened rushed into the galleries and pit, where they began shouting and knocking the floor with their sticks in the most turbulent manner. When the curtain rose Mr. Dowton came forward, but could not obtain a hearing; a pair of scissors, or shears, was thrown from the gallery, and fell very near the actor, who offered twenty guineas reward for the discovery of the person who threw them. Papers were then handed up to the gallery, with an assurance that the piece should be withdrawn, and the *Village Lawyer* substituted in its stead; but nothing would satisfy the ‘Knights of the Thimble,’ who continued more vociferous than ever. At length the managers sent a message to Mr. Graham, the magistrate at Bow Street, who speedily arrived with some officers, and having sworn in several extra constables, proceeded to the galleries, and, instantly seizing the

rioters, took ten or twelve of the principal ringleaders into custody. They were next day held to bail. The performance of *The Tailors*, however, took place, in despite of the sensitiveness of the professors of that useful art. When the curtain drew up, and discovered on the stage *three tailors seated on a board*, the rage of the malcontents broke forth again, until the Bow Street officers made their appearance a second time, and dragged some of the offenders out; order was then restored. In the meanwhile a mob assembled outside the theatre, but a detachment of the horse guards, which had been despatched in aid, kept the street quiet, whilst constables, stationed in different parts of the house, checked any fresh disposition to riot. Had this spirited example been followed at the commencement of the O. P. row, the managers of Covent Garden Theatre would have been spared much expense and annoyance, the respectable portion of the audience the interruption of their rational amusement, and the public the shame and scandal of such proceedings.

§ *Strange Adventures of Bradbury the Clown.*

When the genial, and always hopeful Charles Matthews the elder was on one of his "tours" in 1811, he found himself the unwilling assistant at an extraordinary incident, in which a member of his profession was concerned. By another curious chance,

Mr. Graham, the Bow Street magistrate, happened to be in Portsmouth at the moment, and was thus enabled to take an important share in investigating the rather mysterious occurrence about to be described.

Matthews wrote from Portsmouth, on October 23rd, 1811, to his wife this account of the affair :—

“ I should have written yesterday to you, but a great deal of my time, and more of my attention, was taken up by a most melancholy circumstance :—A young man of family, the Hon. Mr. ——, staying at an inn in Portsmouth, previously to sailing for India, where he was going out as an aide-de-camp to General ——, with a party of friends, also officers, joined company at supper one evening with Mr. Bradbury, the clown of Covent Garden Theatre, a person of very gentlemanlike exterior and manners, and ambitious of the society of gentlemen. He was in the habit of using a very magnificent and curious snuff-box, and on this occasion it was much admired by the party, and handed round for inspection from one to the other.

“ Mr. Bradbury soon after left the inn, and retired to his lodging, when he missed his box, and immediately returned to inquire for it. The gentlemen with whom he had spent the evening had all retired to bed ; but he left word with the porter to mention to the officers early the next day that he had left the box, and to request them to restore it to him when found. The next morning Mr. Bradbury again hastened to the inn,

anxious to recover his property, and met on his way the Hon. Mr. ——, and communicated his loss to him; when he was informed by that gentleman that a similar circumstance had occurred to himself, his bedroom having been robbed the night before of his gold watch, chain, and seals, &c., and that he was on his way to a Jew in the town to apprise him of the robbery, in order that if such articles should be offered for sale, he might stop them, and detain the person who presented them. This was very extraordinary! Mr. Bradbury then met the other gentlemen of the party, and was told by them that their rooms had also been robbed—one of bank-notes to a great amount; another of a gold watch, &c.; and a third of a silver watch, gold chains, rings, &c. All the rooms slept in by the party were upon the same floor, which circumstance doubtless gave great facility to the thief. These discoveries, as may be imagined, created great consternation in the house, and soon became the topic of the town. All was confusion. Bills were printed and issued—rewards offered for the recovery of the property and detection of the thief or thieves. The Hon. Mr. —— was violently infuriated by his loss; and as he was bound to sail from Portsmouth when the ship was ready, he naturally dreaded being compelled to depart without his property. He hinted, too, that he had certain suspicions of certain people, and even whispered them to some of the



persons interested; but as they were of a vague character, they could not, of course, be acted upon. Great excitement continued; and the master of the inn, reasonably alarmed for the credit of his house, upon finding that Mr. Graham, the Bow Street magistrate, was in Portsmouth, waited upon him, and described the situation in which he was, and the circumstances which had led to his embarrassment.

“Mr. Graham wrote up to London for one of his most intelligent officers—a man of the name of Rivett. This man came down promptly, to the great satisfaction of the Hon. Mr. —, who was most desirous of investigating the mystery, and of detecting the thief, his time becoming short, and his anxiety to recover his property previously to sailing, rendering him more impatient than the rest of the party. Mr. Bradbury and all the officers gave their several accounts of their losses, and Rivett was put in full possession of every particular relating to the business. He then proposed that he should search the house generally, and all the trunks. This was highly approved of, and cordially agreed to by every inmate; and as the Hon. Mr. — was evidently the most eager of the party to arrive at the truth, it was proposed that his trunks, &c., might be the first to be examined, to which he assented, and immediately delivered his keys, and accompanied the officer and gentlemen, with Mr. Bradbury and others, to his room. The ceremony of search having been

scrupulously gone through (of course, without anything being discovered), the next and the next room was entered by the spectators, and all with similar results. Nothing was to be found, and the affair was inexplicable to all. The losers were in despair, and the unfortunate aide-de-camp was much pitied on account of his approaching voyage, which would necessarily preclude any chance of his regaining his valuables by his own exertions. There was a general pause. At length Rivett addressed the gentlemen, observing that there was yet a duty unperformed, and which was a painful one to him—he must search the *persons* of all present, and as the Hon. Mr.—’s trunks had been the first to be inspected, perhaps he would allow him to examine him at once. To this he agreed, but the next moment he was observed to look very ill. Rivett was proceeding to search him, as a matter of course, when he requested that everybody would leave the room, except the officer and Mr. Bradbury, which request was immediately complied with. He then fell upon his knees, entreated for mercy, and placed Mr. Bradbury’s box in his hand, begging him to forgive him and spare his life! Rivett upon this proceeded to search him, but he resisted; the object was effected by force, and the greater part of the property found that had been stolen in the house. The officer, conceiving that he had not got the whole of the bank-notes, inquired of Mr. — where the remainder was; when

he pointed to a pocket-book which was under the foot of the bed; and while Rivett relaxed his hold of him, and was in the act of stooping to pick up the book, Mr. ——— caught up a razor and cut his throat. Rivett and Mr. Bradbury seized an arm each, and forced the razor from him; but he was so determined on self-destruction that he twisted his head about violently in different ways, in order to make the wound larger and more fatal. To prevent him from continuing this, he was braced up with linen round his neck so tightly that he could not move it. A surgeon of the town, with two assistants, came, and, after seeing the wound, gave it as their opinion that it was possible for him to recover, and by the assistance of some powerful soldiers holding him, they dressed the wound. His clothes were then cut off, and he was carried down stairs into another room. During this operation he coughed violently, but whether naturally or by design, to make his wound worse, was not ascertained. It had, however, the effect of setting his wound bleeding again, and the dressing was obliged to be repeated. Two men sat up with him all night. On the next morning the depositions of the witnesses were taken before the Mayor, and Mr. ——— was committed.

“ Poor Mr. Bradbury was standing close to the unfortunate young man when he committed the sudden attempt upon his own life. The horror of the act, and the shocking appearance of his lacerated throat, the

blood from which flowed out upon Mr. Bradbury—in short, this heartrending result of the previous agitation and discovery, acted upon the sensibility of Mr. Bradbury to such an extent as to deprive him of reason. This fact was noticeable two days after the above scene, by his entering a church, and after the service was ended going into the vestry, and requesting the clergyman to pray for him, as he intended *to cut his throat!* This distemper of mind was not too great at first to admit of partial control; but it daily increased, and ultimately caused him to be placed under restraint.

“The skill and attention of the surgeons” who were called in, had placed the unfortunate Mr. — in a state of recovery, and he waited to take his trial at the next sessions; when, I believe, no evidence appearing against him, he escaped the consequences of his dishonourable act.

“Poor Bradbury, the clown,” goes on the husband, “I heard was confined here in the gaol, as they have no mad-house. From liking to see everything, and secondly from an idea of being of service to him, as he was entirely surrounded by strangers, I went to see him. I found him strapped down to a miserable bed, in a strait-waistcoat. Strange to say, though I have a very slight acquaintance with him, he recognized me, called me by name, and became instantly calm from a raving fit. He immediately began to complain of the treatment he had received, and declared that he was

completely at a loss to account for it. He then related to me all the circumstances of his journey from London to Ireland, in so coherent a manner, that I began to imagine he was perfectly sane; but suddenly his eye changed, and he began to wander, saying that from Ireland he had been dragged all through Portugal; and that the mayor here, who was in the room, had been offended because he had at church, during the sacrament, handed Buonaparte some wine and cake before him, and for that he had tied his arms, and employed men to dress themselves in various shapes, and to dance constantly round the room to annoy him, and so on. I now very soon calmed him again, by declaring that I would undertake to get him away that night to London (the mayor having told me that it was their intention to send him to Hoxton, near London, in a chaise that night, as they have no madhouse here). This immediately took possession of his mind. I left him with the promise of returning for him in the evening. The mayor begged I would attend, and I was most happy that I happened to be in the way, for without me to a certainty they would not have got him off. I went at five o'clock, and found that he had been raving again; but he became instantly calm when he saw me. I told him to be quiet, and they would put on his clothes. They then took off the waistcoat, and he suffered himself to be dressed, and assisted himself. But when the strait waistcoat was offered to

him again, he began to show his spirit. The men were alarmed, as he had one day before beaten six of them, and made his escape completely to the street door, which fortunately was too strong for him. He now declared that no man living should put it on him again. To show how completely he depended on me, the instant I whispered to him that he ought to submit, he helped himself into it; and winked at me with the greatest delight. By this means we got him quietly into the chaise. I wrote to Elliston to find out his friends, if he has any. I assure you it was a most affecting scene, and I hope will sufficiently excuse my not writing before."

But there was yet another remarkable person mixed up in the transaction, viz. the famous clown Grimaldi, whom some admirers attempted to set up as his rival. He was much shocked to learn of his affliction, and, hearing that he was confined in a madhouse at Hoxton, went to see the sufferer. Being shown to the cell, and seeing the usual accompaniments of restraint, shaved head, &c., he drew back in some alarm, but to his astonishment was addressed in reassuring terms by his brother clown, who wished to persuade him that he was not mad at all, and that he had merely assumed madness for a particular purpose. This apparently rational tone had of course only the effect of making the other keep on, but at last the explanation offered began to

have its effect. His story was—and Grimaldi as well as Matthews used to tell the tale—that great offers had been made him by the culprit to withdraw from the prosecution, but these he resisted until an offer rose to the shape of a handsome annuity. To this he yielded. The difficulty then arose of arranging the matter so as to avoid the charge of ‘compounding a felony.’ It was with this view that the madness was simulated. The case came on for trial, when it being represented that the prosecutor was *non compos*, and therefore unable to come forward, the officer was discharged. As soon as Bradbury learned the news, he gave over affecting insanity and was discharged from confinement. Such was the story, or perhaps legend, as reported by Grimaldi.” It will be seen that there are certain improbabilities, as it is scarcely likely that a prosecutor, especially one certain of earning a fair professional income, would have submitted to such serious trials to secure an annuity. Neither could his simulation have been so perfect as to deceive police officers and professional experts, whereas Matthews’ account is highly circumstantial, and describes a case of what seems to be genuine madness. But Grimaldi reports the final episode, which really appears to invalidate his own story. As soon as he was released, he reappeared on the stage, and in response to some familiarity on the part of the audience, made some offensive and indecent gesture for which he was hooted from the stage, and,

it is said, never reappeared. This looks as if, with the excitement, the insanity had broken out afresh. The whole forms a curious adventure, belonging as it does to the history of the stage as well as to that of Bow Street.

§ *The O. P. Riots.*

The vicinity of the great theatres to the office was, of course, another reason for their connection ; and, as the two patent theatres engrossed the chief entertainment of the town, and were conducted on so vast a scale, it may be conceived that this control was a very serious difficulty for the police. The entertainment at these places was, unluckily, not confined to what was dramatic ; and there were large portions of the houses, such as the saloons, where diversion of a less intellectual kind was sought. Theatrical riots, arising out of the discontent of the audience, either real or assumed, were ordinary incidents, and are evidences of the extraordinary social licence that then obtained. The general distribution of theatres over the town has helped to put an end to such disorders. Such sensitiveness on the ground of a theatrical oppression may be taken to show, on the other hand, a less keen interest in the concerns of the drama.

The annals of the English have often been marked by theatrical riots, during which the public, in a very brutal and savage fashion, have shown the managers how much they are dependent on the humour, ill or



good, of their patrons. Theatres have often been sacked, the benches torn up, the stage invaded, the chandeliers smashed. Performers who have incurred the ill-will of the mob have been driven from the boards. But few *émeutes* have been so disastrous and so regularly organized as those known as the "O. P. Riots" of 1809.

The hardship of the case was extraordinary. A fine national theatre had been burnt down. Money was raised, a new and more magnificent structure reared within a short period; the savings of eminent performers were invested, when, owing to the dissatisfaction of an unruly mob, encouraged by persons of education, these ruinous disorders broke out on the very night of the opening, and were continued for weeks, destroying the whole prestige and prosperity of the house, which were so much needed under such a crushing weight of liabilities.

The management had found it necessary to rearrange their new house with a view to make it more profitable, to meet the debt and other expenses, and had introduced a row of private boxes on one of the tiers. They had also made a slight increase of sixpence to the pit price, and of a shilling to the dress-boxes. No one could have imagined that these changes could have entailed the frightful disorders and riots that were to follow. They opened their theatre under a keen sense of security, full of hope, of

success, and profit; and no one was more secure or hopeful than the stately Kemble.

Yet there were menacing rumours abroad. It was amusing to find that the public was then afflicted with one of those recurring fits of morality, on which Lord Macaulay was so happily satirical long after, and which are difficult to account for except on the saving theory suggested by Hudibras. Loud cries were raised against the obnoxious private-boxes, the offensive arrangement of a small saloon attached to each shocking every one of decency. The decorations were sumptuous, and much admiration was excited by the chandeliers, which, it was announced, displayed no less than 25,000 glittering cut-glass drops! More legitimate cause of admiration were the statues and bas-reliefs, still to be seen in Bow Street, with the old columns, and which were chiefly the work of Flaxman.

The opening night was September 18th, 1809, and the entertainment consisted of *Macbeth* and *The Quaker*. Catalani was announced, as a great attraction, to appear later on. The house was crammed, and, it was noticed, with a number of ill-looking fellows, who had brought bludgeons. All was quiet at first, but they were waiting for Kemble. When he made his appearance to speak the Prologue the storm burst. Never was there such a scene of confusion. The bludgeon-men in the pit rose, stood on the

benches, roared, shrieked, and raised a din or combination of noises that was incredible and unendurable. Not a word could be heard. The play began and continued in dumb-show. Mrs. Siddons came on, but her appearance made no difference. The hideous noises were sustained through the whole course of the tragedy, the actors not taking the trouble to repeat their speeches. At last the magistrates from Bow Street arrived, and two appeared on the stage, one armed with the Riot Act; but they were driven off. Soldiers and police were brought in, and stormed the galleries, but the leaders escaped into the boxes, climbing down by the newly-painted and gilt pillars. At last the house was cleared.

All who know anything of the history of mob-violence can well fancy that such an opening was seized on eagerly as an encouragement to repeat this disorderly entertainment. Nothing is so exciting or dramatic as confusion of this kind; it is "better than any play." Even a street-row has its attractions. Some enjoy beyond measure taking part in such conflicts, while the more decorous feel an irresistible attraction in looking on. Accordingly all the disorderly spirits of the town crowded to the theatre on the succeeding nights, while leaders were found to regularly organize their forces. A kind of animosity was worked up against Kemble, whose cold and haughty bearing was almost a challenge. He aggravated this ill-feeling

when, on the third night, he came forward, and, with an assumed simplicity, asked to know “*what it was they wanted?*” There were roars of anger and disgust, with cries of “What ridiculous affectation!” And the great man had to retire. It was wonderful how he could have withstood the abuse, the ridicule of his peculiarities which was showered on him. Epigrams, offensive verses of all kinds, caricatures, assailed him every day, such as :

Old Kemble  
Begins to tremble.

Or “Mr. Kemble’s head *itches*,” or, as in a parody of “Roley Poley, Gammon and Spinach,”—

John Kemble would a acting go,  
Heigh ho, says Kemble.  
He raised the price which he thought too low,  
Whether the public would let him or no,  
With his roley-poley, &c.

It will hardly be credited that these scenes of shocking riot went on for some sixty nights—every night the “row” seeming to increase. The mob came provided with drums, bugles, cat-calls, and every instrument that could make hideous noise; and at intervals “the O. P. dance” was called for, when the whole pit leaped on its feet and performed a mad series of jumpings and stampings. A regular part of

the nightly performance was the making of speeches from the boxes and pit, and the display of placards with insulting or encouraging inscriptions. Unfortunately there were persons of education and intelligence who saw here an opportunity of making themselves conspicuous by leading the rioters, among whom was a Roman Catholic barrister, the well-known Clifford, who became the recognized spokesman of the mob. This man lent his knowledge of law and talent to the rioters, and he used to attend the theatre and be saluted uproariously as the champion of the cause. The managers, driven to desperation by the sense of impending ruin and the loss of their gains, determined to meet violence with violence. They accordingly took counsel at Bow Street office with the magistrates, and secured the services of our old friend Townshend, with his band of followers, supported by Mendoza and other pugilists, and also by amateurs like Lord Yar-mouth. These combined forces made an attack on the crowd. But this would not do. The mob met them courageously; tremendous conflicts ensued without advantage to either side. But the managers incurred great odium, on the score of the pugilists—a step that only consolidated the opposition. “Clifford for ever!” was the cry heard through the din; for the counsellor declared loudly that this beating of his Majesty’s subjects by hired bruisers was against law, which it possibly was. Infuriated by this new sort of opposition,

the managers had him arrested outside by police officers and dragged off from the theatre to Bow Street, where the magistrates were ready sitting. But they discharged him. On which the counsellor brought an action against Brandon, the box-keeper, who had ordered his arrest, and obtained a verdict, with five pounds damages.

Meantime the rioters nightly increased in organization and violence. A new feature were the "rushes" made from one side of the house to the other. Vulgar fellows made speeches alluding to "that there gemmen in that there 'at." At last the managers saw they must come to terms. They proposed a committee, who should examine the books. A dinner was given to Clifford at a tavern, at which Kemble presented himself, and offered to reduce the boxes to the old price, and to abolish the obnoxious private boxes. The mob, however, refused to ratify the treaty unless a fresh article was added—the dismissal of Brandon, the box-keeper, who was odious to them. This, in spite of many piteous appeals—"an old servant," humble apologies from the delinquent, &c.,—was insisted upon; and at last the management surrendered the point. Then a placard was hoisted with the words, "We are satisfied;" and the "O. P." riots were over.

Many reflections will be suggested by these scenes, and it may be fancied that more exertion on the part

of the police authorities would have quelled the disorders. It might seem, too, that in our day such a display would be impossible. This may be doubted. Were the mob of London seriously to take up a quarrel like this, under a sense of injury, the difficulties of dealing with it would be enormous, and perhaps insuperable. The power of expressing disapprobation, claimed as a right, could be developed easily, so as to make an interruption to the performance feasible. In a large theatre, such as Drury Lane, and with the audience of one mind, the police might be powerless. It would, of course, be more easy to deal with the evil by way of prosecution and penalties.

The nightly incidents of this extraordinary episode—which, paradoxical as it may seem, could only have been tolerated in a free people—have the most varied cast, and would indeed fill a volume.<sup>1</sup> Every sort of whim and humour and shape of tumult seem to have been displayed. But such sport was death to the management, and the theatre never recovered from these disasters. People in squalid garb, and even in rags, were seen sitting in the boxes; so much had all order and control disappeared. One of the liveliest sallies called forth by the tumult was the following:—

<sup>1</sup> They will be found described at length in the *Dramatic Censor* of the year.

Here lies the body  
of  
NEW PRICE,  
An ugly child and base born,  
who died of the  
WHOOPIG COUGH,  
on  
23rd September, 1809,  
aged  
SIX DAYS.



## CHAPTER III.

### BANK AND COACH ROBBERIES.

#### § *The Paisley Bank.*

It has often been noticed how much the changes in improvement in communication have affected social life, entirely abolishing original types of character, and fashion, of life and manners. Nothing shows this more curiously than the ever-welcome Pickwick, where even the inns and coaches seemed to have engendered a special tone of thought and eccentricity, and were the cause of many adventures. The swindler and chevalier of industry had a fine field for his operations, and, from the slowness of communication, could count on a start of days before lame-footed Justice could hear of his deeds, and overtake him.

One of the most remarkable, and at the same time successful exploits which engaged the Bow Street police, was the great robbery of the Paisley Bank, in 1810. This was long preserved among the traditions of the Runners, and Sayer, who was the one so fortunately concerned in the business, must have made

his comrades' mouths water, as he dwelt on the profitable incidents of the case.

One James Mackcoull was a skilful and notorious housebreaker, of whom it was recorded, that when a child, he had shown his early skill by dexterously cutting away a bag which contained the whole hoard of a poor "cat's-meat man." He and a friend, known as "Huffey White," had planned to rob the Chester Bank; but, having entrusted a box of house-breaking implements to be conveyed by the coach, a skeleton key, sticking out, betrayed them. They were arrested, and Mackcoull imprisoned for six months, his associate being sentenced to transportation. Mackcoull, however, greatly daring, had planned a grand *coup*, and actually contrived to get his partner released for the express purpose of securing his aid in the business.

They set off together for Glasgow, and for weeks made the most minute and careful preparations before attempting this *coup*. The bank was surveyed in every direction, new and perfect tools were ordered from London; and close relations were entered into with the employés.

A Bow Street officer has described minutely, in his "Recollections," the elaborate preparations made by these men. He tells us that, "When all was ready, they first tried their keys, which being found not to answer, Mackcoull himself took a journey to London, with a

wooden model of what they all conceived to be the construction of the bank locks, in order that the mistakes in the skeleton keys might be rectified. He was absent on this errand about a fortnight, and during that time French and White never ventured out of doors after eight or nine at night, but no sooner had Mackcoull returned, than they went out every night at ten, and did not return till twelve, Huffey White, on one occasion, remaining out all night, so much difficulty was there, even to the very last, in getting the keys to work. It may seem strange, perhaps, that the burglary was delayed for fourteen days after the depredators had made every preparation to commit it, but experienced thieves, like skilful generals, often show the greatest skill in securing their retreat. The policy of Mackcoull and his confederates in delaying the execution of their plot will be seen immediately, when it is known that the fair week was fast approaching, and that then Glasgow, as they well knew, would be overrun with thieves and blackguards of all descriptions, some of whom, it was most likely, would be suspected of the burglary, rather than three persons who were known to have lived in respectability at Glasgow for weeks previously. So judicious, indeed, were they, and so evidently anxious to fix suspicion on the thieves visiting the fair, that they further delayed the robbery until the very last day of the fair, when all who had attended it would be

leaving Glasgow, and when, therefore, a depredation of so serious a nature would be most likely to be committed by one or more of those who had visited the fair—but to my narrative.

“ It was about one o’clock on the Sunday morning, when Mackcoull and his companions rose from the supper-table, where they had been regaling, in the private room of a certain flash house in the very heart of Glasgow, and where they had met that evening by an appointment made on parting at the coach-office. They took separate roads to avoid being remarked, and met again at their final destination. Now the premises of the Paisley Union Bank were situated at the corner of the street, on the ground floor, the bank itself consisting only of two rooms, in the inner of which was an arched closet or vault, with an iron door, where the money was always deposited every day, when the time for closing the office arrived. The burglars found themselves at the street door of the banking-house; not a creature was visible near them, nor was there any fear of the watch passing for the next hour, having timed their visit so as to be secure from his interruption; besides, the outer door key went so easy, after the repeated trials that had been made of it, that the door, they knew, could be opened and shut in a few seconds. Mackcoull and French stood on the look-out before the entrance to the bank, screening White while he opened the door. On enter-

# £100 Reward

ABSCONDED from the Duties of his Employment, a Man who has the audacity to call himself an Actor. He is about Fifty Years of Age, Five Feet Ten Inches High, of a very dark Complexion, and is well-known by the name of

## BLACK JACK,

His features as well as his principles savor those of A JEW, and his Temper and Manners, come very near to an Imperious BASHAW. He had on, when he was last seen in his Employment, a Superb Dress of Green Velvet and Gold, which is said to have cost the amazing Sum of

## Five Hundred Guineas,

It is supposed, that the extraordinary Degree of Pride, and the wonderful obstinacy and unwillingness this Man has lately shewn to listen to the voice of his Employers, have been the principal Causes of his thus absenting himself: altho' he is considered by many to be touched about the Upper Yiers, as he has been observed when it has been his Business to face the

## O. P.

side of the House, to---start and stare---and, in a most ridiculous and incoherent manner to---sue out "What do you want!!! What do you want!!!"

Whoever will give such information of him, as shall lead to his Apprehension, so that he may meet the punishment he merits, shall, upon application to the Office of the O. P.'s, at the Sign of the Rattle and Horn, Put-street, receive the above Reward.



ing—having carefully closed the street-door—Mackcull pulled from out of his pocket a lighted lantern, nor was there much difficulty in finding out the safe in which the money was deposited, it being so conspicuous as necessarily to attract the notice of any stranger. With a little trouble the burglars at last got one of their keys to open the iron door, and then they might almost be said to be in possession of their booty. In fact, two of the drawers in the safe, each full of notes, had incautiously been left open; two other drawers were locked, and these the burglars forced with chisels. In the drawers they found notes, gold, and silver to an enormous amount. There was a box, too, marked ‘Edinburgh,’ which Mackcull pounced upon the moment he saw it, and so great was his eagerness to ascertain the contents, which he fancied to be much more valuable than they were, that finding some difficulty in forcing the lock, he broke the lid of the box in two. It contained some bundles of notes, which Mackcull ran hastily over, and found, to his great disappointment, that they did not amount to more than 4000*l.*—about a fourth of the whole plunder, as will be seen hereafter. Finding nothing more of value in the safe, excepting acceptances and other unavailable property, they hastened to pack up the booty; the gold and silver he put into his pocket. And now the burglars prepared to quit the premises, calculating that there was yet time to do so before the

hour elapsed when the watchman would again pass the street-door. But they were wrong, and their mistake had nearly ruined all, inasmuch as a moment's more delay in quitting the bank would have caused them to run up against the very man whom they were so desirous to avoid. His voice, calling the hour, was heard behind them before they had proceeded many yards along Ingram Street—the sound was enough—they rushed down the first turning they came to, and avoiding all the highways, hastened on to the rendezvous where they had supped together about an hour previously.”

It proved that the booty which they carried away, amounted to no less than 20,000*l.* in notes and gold! They had contrived the business so skilfully that nothing was disturbed so as to excite suspicion. They hurried up to London in a post-chaise—changing a 20*l.* note at every stage—and arrived at the metropolis in safety.

All that follows, as related by the Bow Street officer,—notably Sayer—is interesting, as exhibiting the impunity enjoyed by thieves at this time.

The sensation caused by this daring and successful scheme placed Mackcull in the first rank. Not less remarkable was the skill he showed in dealing with the spoil he had secured, which was in the embarrassing shape of notes. Indeed, all through his course he showed a remarkable power and command of resource,



which enabled him to control and almost dictate to those who were pursuing him. The bank, who were sorely pressed by this loss, despatched an agent to town to try and recover the property; and the robber, seeing their eagerness, contrived to enter into negotiations with them. This part of the transaction has been already narrated.<sup>1</sup> The successful depredator remained in possession of the most substantial portion of his spoil.

After a long interval of some years, he returned to London, when he was recognized and arrested on a comparatively trivial charge. He was kept in custody until a warrant had arrived from Scotland, and this having been endorsed by the magistrates at Bow Street, the prisoner was sent off to Scotland, decorated with a pair of "darbies," weighing upwards of forty-two pounds, said to be those worn by the famous highwayman, Rann, better known as *Sixteen-String Jack*. In addition to his leg-irons, he was also securely handcuffed, and being placed on the top of one of the coaches, departed on his journey to the north. Two days after his arrival at Glasgow he was examined by one of the baillies, to whom he told the most bare-faced lies, and behaved in the most impudent manner, peremptorily refusing to answer a great number of the interrogations put to him, and finally himself ending the examination by plumply telling the baillie

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, Vol. I. p. 158.

that "he had been plagued quite enough, and should not answer any more questions whatever."

"He was committed for trial to Glasgow gaol, and when there did not attempt seriously to deny the crime with which he was charged, but offered to put the bank in possession of 1000*l.* of their money, and, to show his sincerity, gave up to the agent of the branch bank of Glasgow a promissory note for 400*l.* at six months' date, granted by himself to Ann Wheeler, his sister, and bearing her endorsement. Mr. Harmer, the noted Old Bailey lawyer, managed the whole of the affair relative to the 1000*l.*, which was paid by him to the bank's agent in London, *all in Scotch bank paper*, no doubt (as Harmer himself must have well known) some of the notes of which they had been robbed, and which Harmer received from Mackcoull's mother. On the money being paid *Mackcoull was set at liberty!* and the first thing he did, on returning to London, was to sue Harmer for 1000*l.*, alleging that he had no authority whatever from him to pay it away. The lawyer, wily as he was, not being able to disprove this assertion, pleaded counter-claims as a set-off, and Mackcoull actually recovered between two and three hundred pounds."

All this seems incredible. But many such treaties were arranged at the "Brown Bear."

This extraordinary person seems to have been quite familiar with all the minutiae of the law bearing



JAMES MACKCOULL.



on the holders of bills—valuable consideration, &c., for the bank having got possession of a draft or promissory note, which he had purchased with some of the stolen notes, he had the impudence to bring an action “for the restitution of his bills which had been most illegally taken from his person. The evidence that came out in this action was sufficient to establish his guilt in the robbery. His confederates then rounded on him, and he was at last convicted.” Still his extraordinarily good fortune attended him.

“Now it was that, finding his fate inevitable, his fortitude and resolution forsook him. He was overwhelmed with despair, and repeatedly declared ‘that had the eye of God not been upon him, such a connected chain of evidence never could have been brought forward.’ His mental faculties became at times impaired—at one time he was in a wild fit of vivacity, and the next in the most pitiable despondency, being evidently all the while utterly unconscious of either what he said or did. By the exertions of his wife (whom he acknowledged to have treated most shamefully) a respite of his sentence was obtained, first for one month, and afterwards during his Majesty’s pleasure. For a short time after this his health and spirits improved, but gradually relapsed, and at last his health became so bad as permanently to affect his mental faculties and make him completely silly and childish. In his sleep he was

haunted by frightful dreams and visions, and frequently awoke with dreadful cries, starting up suddenly and uttering such horrible imprecations as to terrify all who were confined in the same cell, to such a degree that none of them would remain with him. His hair which, previous to his trial, had been of a jet-black, was now changed to the whiteness of snow. His body became frightfully emaciated, and his eyes, the expression of which was never very prepossessing, now assumed a glaring wildness that was almost demoniacal. He crawled about his cell grinding his teeth, foaming at the mouth, and uttering, sometimes, all manner of blasphemies, while at others he appeared to be suffering from extreme terror at the punishment which he believed eventually awaited him, not only in this world but the next. In short, he went through many deaths, and this horrible state of mental agony becoming at last too great for human strength and nature to endure, at last put a period to his sufferings. He died raving mad, and in the most pitiable state of terror, yet dreadfully enraged if spoken to on the subject of religion. His death occurred on the 22nd of September, 1820, in the county jail of Edinburgh."

#### § *A Coach Robbery.*

Another department for the ingenuity of thieves was the robbery of mail coaches. Such operations re-

quired much daring, and were not without their dramatic elements. Here we must also admire the ingenuity and versatility of men like Vickery, who, considering the distance of places and the difficulties of communication, set off to hunt out the traces of the robber, and generally succeeded in their object. These qualities were particularly displayed in his pursuit of one Cooke, who, in 1815, had robbed the Hertford coach.

There was an agreement between Messrs. Christie and Co., the Hertford bankers, and the proprietors of the Hertford coach, which runs from the Hertford to the "Bull Inn," Holborn, a hostelry still surviving, to have a strong place in the coach for the carrying of valuable parcels, containing remittances to Messrs. Ramsbottom and Co., in London, who were their agents. On Saturday evening, the 14th of May, a parcel of notes and bills was made up and locked in an iron box; a duplicate to the key was kept by Messrs. Ramsbottom and Co., the bankers, in London. A clerk took the box to the coach before eight o'clock; the coach was then in the street, opposite the "Bell Inn," the horses not being put to. He put the box into the secure place made for it at the back part of the coach, and screwed it in safe with two iron screws.

A shoemaker who resided opposite the "Bell Inn" in Hertford, recollected seeing the prisoner on the

morning of the 16th of May, particularly his having new clothes on. He was close to his windows, watching the coach before the horses were put to. He talked with a man under the market-place. This man did not go by the coach. While the prisoner was standing within a short distance of the coach, he saw the clerk put the bank parcel into it. After Mr. Henshall got out the prisoner went in, and remained about five minutes, during which time the attitude and motion of his body was the same as the bank clerk's when he was fastening the parcel in. The coach, all the while, remained in the street, and the horses were not put to.

Owen Williams, the clerk of Messrs. Ramsbottom, the bankers in London, said that on the 16th of May he attended at the "Bull Inn," Holborn, to meet the coach, unlocked the place, but found no parcel; there being no violence used, he had no suspicion of its having been stolen, but concluded that it had been neglected to be sent.

John Vickery, the officer, deposed that he had known the prisoner for between three and four years, and during that time he had been in the habit of seeing him every few days, but had not seen him since the robbery of the Hertford coach, till Sunday se'nnight, when he discovered him coming to town by the Yarmouth Télégraph coach, and apprehended him at the Whalebone turnpike, on the Rumford



road. He was suspected to have robbed the Hertford coach, and bills offering a reward of 100*l.* for his apprehension were issued, and he, in consequence, called several times at a house in Lazenby Court, Long Acre, where he lived with a woman as his wife. She said he was at Brighton or Bridport, but there is no doubt but that he had been to Dieppe. He left a bill, offering a reward for his apprehension, with her.

Once on the track Vickery ascertained that about two or three months since the prisoner called upon a woman of the name of Sarah Porter; she then understood him to be the guard of the Monmouth mail coach. He left a parcel with her, and called again in about half an hour, her husband being from home, when he asked permission to go into a room which he could have to himself for a short time; she showed him into one, and after a time he called Mrs. Porter into the room and delivered to her a small paper parcel, desiring her to take care of it, as it contained bank notes to the amount of 200*l.* While she was in the room with him she observed him to have a great number of other notes; a great many of them appeared to be torn. He told her he had taken the notes in the course of his trade. The next day he called again and gave a 5*l.* note to get changed, telling her what she bought she was to have for her trouble, only to give him the change, which was done. The prisoner called upon her again in a short time after,

when she got another note changed for him at the same shop, and after that she got another 5*l.* note changed for him at a linendraper's shop, but he never called for the change of that note.

Not less daring was the robbery in the same year of the Swansea mail by its guard, appropriately named William Weller. The large sum of 2300*l.* was stolen. This matter also was placed in the hands of Vickery, one of the "runners."

"It appeared that in the month of October, 1813, a parcel containing notes and bills, from the house of Foreman, Fothergill, and Monkhouse, bankers, of Newport, in Monmouthshire, was sent by the mail, directed to Messrs. Downe, Thornton, and Free, bankers, in Bartholomew Lane, London, in a box, and to guard against any suspicion of the value of its contents, the box was put into a coarse canvas bag, and directed to Mr. Richard Fothergill, a relation of one of the partners in the bank of Messrs. Shee, merchants.

"The box and canvas bag arrived as directed, but without the valuable contents. On the discovery being made an express was sent off to Newport, and every possible exertion was made by the agents in London to recover the property and detect the robber. Vickery, the Bow Street officer, was employed on the business. He met with the prisoner at Bristol, when he admitted that he was guard to the

mail on the 3rd of October, 1813, being the day after it was booked to go to London, and he admitted seeing the parcel, and that he saw it conveyed from the 'King's Head' Inn, at Newport, to Bristol, on its way to London. The prisoner after this absconded, there not being sufficient evidence then to detain him in custody. Vickery pursued his inquiries, and learnt that some bank notes had been concealed in Bristol during the week after the robbery of the mail by a woman.

“ The prisoner was a short time since discovered by Adkins, the officer, at the house of Jacobs, a Jew, in Duke's Place, where he went by the name of Green, but admitted to the officer, on his apprehending him, that his name was Weller. After he had undergone a private examination, he was committed to the House of Correction, in Coldbath Fields.

“ The beginning of last month Adkins, the officer, and Mr. Fothergill, one of the partners in the bank, visited the House of Correction, when the prisoner voluntarily confessed to them that he stole the parcel containing the bank notes or bills, took them out of the parcel, having taken them out of the box between Newport and Bristol, and that he fastened the box again and covered it with the canvas bag, so that it should appear in the same state as before he opened it, to prevent discovery till it reached London by the mail.

“ A Mrs. Hickman was then discovered, who confessed that about fourteen or fifteen months since the prisoner came to her house and had some conversation with her daughter, who communicated to her what had passed between them, and after that she agreed to go to Bristol to get some notes changed for the prisoner. He gave her two parcels of them, each containing notes to the amount of 200*l.* When she got to Bristol the banks were shut. The prisoner then told her he had no time to stop, as he must go with the mail, which was going immediately. He then gave her a parcel containing notes to the amount of 700*l.*, and took from his pocket other notes to the amount of 55*l.*, which he said she might pass in Bristol, but it must be done in the course of that day, as the robbery would be found out on the Monday following in London. She after that passed a variety of the notes at a number of shops in Bristol. On her return home at night she and her daughter dug a hole in the garden, and buried the notes that she had not an opportunity of getting changed. Handbills being published soon after, describing her person as having passed the stolen notes from the mail, she went to Bath and lived concealed.

“ The notes which he had entrusted her with were buried in a deep hole by one of her daughters in the garden attached to her house, and the notes remained buried till the month of July following. They were

then dug up and found to be in a very damaged state, in consequence of having lain so long underground. But he made up his mind to bring them to London, to make the most of them. He agreed with Mrs. Hickman to follow him to London to assist him, which she accordingly did. They went to a woman who resided in Merlin's Cave, having been recommended to her by a relation of Mrs. Hickman, as a person who could dispose of the notes, and they gave her notes to the amount of 300*l.* for that purpose. She passed some of them, and said she had uttered them at a linendraper's shop in Old Street Road, and at one in Sun Street, in the purchase of some linendrapery goods."

#### § *Mail-coach Robberies.*

Mr. Edmund Yates, before he established his successful journal, and "increased the public stock of harmless pleasure," held an important position in the Post Office, and in one of his agreeable papers contributed to the old *Household Words* tells us, that once at a sea-side place he found at a butterman's some old "Briefs for the Prosecution" used as wrapping-papers, and which he took home and perused. One case had for him a special interest, as being connected with a robbery in his own department, when in January, 1781, the mail-cart from Maidenhead was, stopped and rifled. I abridge his pleasant account of the prosecution.

“ Between two and three o’clock on the morning of Monday, the 29th of January, 1781, the mail-cart bringing what was called the Bristol mail, and which it should eventually have deposited at the London General Post Office, then in Lombard Street, was jogging easily along towards Cranford Bridge, between the eleventh and twelfth milestone, when the postboy was wakened by the sudden stopping of his horses. He found himself confronted by a single highwayman, who presented a pistol at his head, and bade him get down from the cart. The boy obeyed, slipped down, and glared vacantly about him. The robber touched his forehead with the barrel of the pistol, then ordered him to return back towards Cranford Bridge, and not to look round if he valued his life. He implicitly obeyed the robber’s directions, and never turned his head until he reached the post-office at Hounslow, where he gave the alarm. The Hounslowians turned out and were speedily scouring the country in different directions. They tracked the wheels of the cart on the road to the Uxbridge Road, a short distance along that road towards London, and then along a branch road to the left leading to Ealing Common, about a mile from which, in a field at a distance of eight or ten miles from where the boy was robbed, lay the mail-cart, thrown on its side. The bags from Bath and Bristol for London had been rifled, many of the letters had been broken open, the contents taken away, and the outside covers

were blowing about the field. About twenty-eight letter-bags had been carried off bodily; some distance down the field was found the Reading letter-bag, rifled of its contents. Expresses were at once sent off to head-quarters; and advertisements, giving an account of the robbery, and offering a reward, were immediately printed and distributed throughout the kingdom.

“About nine o’clock on Tuesday morning, the 30th of January (before any account of the robbery could have arrived at Nottingham), a post-chaise rattled into the yard of the ‘Black Moor’s Head’ in that town, and a gentleman in a naval uniform alighted and requested to be shown to a room. He despatched the waiter to the bank of Messrs. Smith, to obtain cash for several Bristol bills which he handed to him. Messrs. Smith declining these bills without some further statement, the gentleman himself called at the counting-house of Messrs. Wright, old-established bankers in Nottingham, where he requested cash for a bank post-bill, No. 11,062, dated 10th of January, 1781, payable to Matthew Humphrys, Esq., and duly endorsed by Matthew Humphrys, but by no one else. Mr. Wright, the senior partner, asked if he were Mr. Humphrys? As the gentleman replied in the negative, Mr. Wright requested him to endorse the bill, which the other did, writing ‘James Jackson’ in a rather illiterate scrawl, but receiving cash for his bill. Immediately on his return to the hotel, he ordered a post-chaise and

left Nottingham for Mansfield, Chesterfield, Sheffield, Leeds, Wakefield, Tadcaster, York, Northallerton, Darlington, Durham, Newcastle, and Carlisle; every one of which places he had to go to the bankers, and obtain cash for bills which he presented. Leaving Carlisle he departed by the direct road for London, and was not heard of for some days.

“So soon as the advertisement arrived in Nottingham, Mr. Wright concluded that the naval gentleman and the robber of the mail-cart were one and the same person. He caused descriptive handbills to be circulated, and sent persons in pursuit. Amongst other places, a number of handbills were sent to Newark by stage-coach on Thursday, the 1st of February, addressed to Mr. Clarke, the postmaster, who also kept the ‘Saracen’s Head’ Inn. Unfortunately this parcel was not opened until about noon on Friday, the 2nd of February; but the moment Mr. Clarke read one of the notices, he recollected that a gentleman in naval uniform had, about four hours before, arrived from Tuxford at his house in a chaise and four, had got change from him for a banknote of 25*l.*, and had immediately started in another chaise and four for Grantham.

“Now was a chance to catch the naval gentleman before he reached London, and an instant pursuit was commenced; but he reached town about three hours before his pursuers. At Enfield Highway, a chaise and four carried him to town, and set him down in



Bishopsgate Street between ten and eleven on Friday night. The postboys saw him get into a hackney-coach, taking his pistols and portmanteau with him ; but they could not tell the number of the coach, nor where he directed the coachman to drive.

“Having thus traced the highwayman to London, of course no one could then dream of taking any further steps towards his apprehension without consulting ‘the public office, Bow Street,’ in the matter ; and at the public office, Bow Street, the affair was placed in the hands of one Mr. John Clark, who enjoyed great reputation as a clever ‘runner.’ Mr. Clark’s first act was to issue a reward for the appearance of the hackney-coachman ; which was so effectual that, on Monday morning, there presented himself at Bow Street an individual named James Perry, who said that he was the coachman in question, and deposed that the person whom he had conveyed in his coach the Friday night preceding was one George Weston, whom he well knew, having been a fellow-lodger of his at the sign of the ‘Coventry Arms’ in Potter’s Fields, Tooley Street, about four months ago. He also said that Weston ordered him to drive to the first court on the left hand in Newgate Street, where he set him down ; Weston walking through the court with his portmanteau and pistols under his arm. On Tuesday, the 6th of February, a coat and waistcoat, similar to those worn by the naval gentleman, were found in

‘Pimlico river, near Chelsea Waterworks,’ by one John Sharp; and finally, Mr. Clark, of the public office, Bow Street, in despair at his want of success, advertised George Weston by name. But, although a large number of notes and bills were ‘put off’ or passed between that time and the month of November, not the least trace could be had of him.

“In the middle of the month of October, a well-dressed gentleman entered the shop of Messrs. Elliott and Davis, upholsterers, in New Bond Street, accompanied by a friend, whom he addressed as Mr. Samuel Watson. The gentleman’s own name was William Johnson; he had, as he informed the upholsterers, recently taken a house and some land near Winchelsea, and he wished them to undertake the furnishing of his house. The upholsterers requested ‘a reference,’ which Mr. Johnson at once gave them in Mr. Hanson, a tradesman residing also in New Bond Street. Mr. Hanson, on being applied to, said that Mr. Johnson had bought goods of him to the amount of 70*l.*, and had paid ready money. Messrs. Elliott and Davis were perfectly satisfied, and professed their readiness to execute Mr. Johnson’s orders. Mr. Johnson’s orders to the upholsterers were to ‘let him have everything suitable for a man of 500*l.* a year, an amount which he possessed in estates in Yorkshire, independent of the allowance made to him by his father, who had been an eminent attorney in Birmingham, but

had retired upon a fortune of 2000*l.* a year.' Elliott and Davis took Mr. Johnson at his word, and completed the order in style; then, about the middle of January, the junior partner started for Winchelsea, and took the bill with him. Like a prudent man he put up at the inn, and made inquiries about his debtor. Nothing could be more satisfactory. Mr. Johnson lived with the best people of the county; Mr. Johnson went everywhere, and was a most affable, liberal, pleasant gentleman. So when Mr. Davis saw Mr. Johnson, and that affable gentleman begged him, as a personal favour, to defer the presentation of his little account until March, he at once concurred, and returned to London to give Elliott a glowing account of his reception. March came, but Johnson's money came not; instead thereof a letter from Johnson, stating that his rents would be due on the 25th of that month, that he did not like to hurry his tenants, but that he would be in town the first or second week in April, and discharge the bill.

“While the partners were in this state, in the second week of April, no money having in the meantime been forthcoming, enter to them a neighbour, Mr. Timothy Lucas, jeweller, who gives them good-day, and then wants to know their opinion of one Mr. Johnson, of Winchelsea. ‘Why?’ asked the upholsterers. Simply because he had given their firm as reference to the jeweller, who had already sold him, on credit, goods to

the amount of 130*l.*, and had just executed an order for 800*l.* worth of jewellery, which was then packed and ready to be sent to Winchelsea. Now consternation reigned in New Bond Street. Johnson's debts to Elliott and Davis were above 370*l.*; to Lucas above 130*l.* Immediate steps must be adopted; so writs were at once taken out, and the London tradesmen, accompanied by a sheriff's officer, set out to Winchelsea to meet their defrauder.

“Early on Monday morning, the 15th of April, as they were passing through Rye, on their way, they observed Mr. Johnson and his intimate friend Mr. Samuel Watson coming towards them on horseback, escorting a chariot, within which were two ladies, and behind which was a groom on horseback. Davis pointed out Johnson to the sheriff's officer, who immediately rode up to arrest him, and was as immediately knocked down by Johnson with the butt-end of his riding-whip. The tradesmen rushed to their officer's assistance, but Johnson and Watson beat them off; and Watson, drawing a pistol, swore he would blow their brains out. This so checked them that Johnson and Watson managed to escape, returned in great haste to Winchelsea, where they packed their plate and valuables, and made off at full speed across country, leaving directions for the ladies to follow them to London in the chariot.

“Clearly the London tradesmen were nonplused; clearly the thing for them to do was, to consult with the mayor and principal tradesmen of the town;

clearly the place for the consultation was the coffee-room of the 'Nag's Head.' In a corner of this coffee-room lay a ne'er-do-weel, a pot-house loiterer, a tap-room frequenter. The tradesmen gave a description of the person of Mr. William Johnson, when Jack went away to the den which he called home, and, returning, requested to hear Mr. Johnson's appearance again described. Jack gave a yell of delight, and, producing from under his ragged coat the handbill issued from the public office, Bow Street, speedily showed that Mr. Johnson of Winchelsea, and George Weston, the mail-robber, were one and the same person.

"No sooner proved than action taken. Off goes an express to the post-office. Mr. John Clark despatches trusty satellites, with the result that Mr. Johnson, with his intimate friend Mr. Watson, are traced from various places to an hotel in Noel Street, near Wardour Street, Soho, where they slept on Tuesday night. Early on Wednesday morning, Mr. John Clark, duly apprised, is at the door of the Noel Street hotel, relates to the landlord his errand, and requests the landlord's assistance, which the landlord refuses. Clark sends a bystander off to Bow Street for assistance, and the landlord proceeds to caution his guests, who immediately take alarm, and come slouching downstairs with their hands in their pockets. Clark, who is standing at the door, does not like their attitude, thinks it safest to let them pass, but as soon as they

are fairly in the street, gives the alarm, 'Stop thief! Stop mail-robbers!' Out rushes a crowd in hot pursuit—pursuit which is temporarily checked by Messrs. Johnson and Watson each producing a brace of pistols, and firing three shots at their followers; but at last they are both captured.

“So far my yellow-leaved, fly-blown, faded brief-sheets, which tell me, moreover, that George Weston and Joseph Weston are the Johnson and Watson of the Winchelsea drama; that they will be proved to be brothers; that George Weston will be proved to be the highwayman, and Joseph the receiver; and that there is a perfect cloud of witnesses ready to prove every indictment. I suppose they did prove it; for, turning back to the first outside folio, I find, in a different handwriting and a later ink, 'Guilty'—to be hanged at Tyburn—May 3; and later still I see an ink cross, which, from official experience, I know to be a record that the last memorandum had been carried out, and that the paper might be put by.”

Mr. Yates came upon another case that was more directly connected with his department. It is more interesting, as showing how nearly sixty years ago, when neither telegraphs nor railways were at work, there was a very sound and satisfactory system of supervision, with mail agents and all the rest.

“At six o'clock on Monday morning, the 29th of

January, 1827, the Dover mail-coach, mud-bespattered and travel-stained, pulled up before the General Post Office in Lombard Street, and the official porters in attendance dragged from it the receptacle for letters (then containing correspondence from France, from foreign countries transmitting through France, and from Dover itself), which, in official language, was known as the mail-portmanteau. The coachman had jerked the horses' heads into the air preparatory to walking them round to the stable, when a pale-faced clerk with a pen behind his ear came rushing out of the little side-door, tumbling over the guard, and exclaiming, 'Hold hard, for God's sake! The mail has been robbed!'

“When the two official porters carried the mail-portmanteau into the foreign office of the General Post Office, they placed it before the clerk waiting to receive it. There was little time to count and sort and despatch the letters; the clerk in a minute had unbuckled the straps of the square portmanteau and thrown them back, preparatory to opening the two compartments, when in each of the compartments he saw a long cut, as with a knife, large enough to admit of the enclosed bags being drawn out. Rather staggered at this, the clerk hastily turned all the bags out on to the floor, noticing as he did so that several of them were cut and frayed. Then he looked for the Paris letter-bill, which he found in due course, and

read as follows :—‘ No. 203. Direction Générale des Postes de France. Départ de Paris pour Londres, ce Vendredi, 26 Janvier, année 1827. Le contenu de votre dernière dépêche du 24<sup>me</sup> a été exactement distribué, et ultérieurement expédié pour sa destination : l’administration vous demande le même soin pour le contenu de la présente du reçu, de laquelle vous voudrez bien lui donner avis.’ Then followed a list of the bags and their weights, from France, Italy, Spain and Portugal, Switzerland, Germany, and Turkey. The clerk carefully compared the bill in his hand with the bags lying before him, and instantly found that the Italian bag, the heaviest, and probably therefore the most valuable, was missing.

“ That night, when the return Dover mail left the ‘ Elephant and Castle,’ it had for one of its inside passengers the solicitor to the General Post Office ; a man of clear head and prompt action, to whom the investigation of delicate matters connected with the postal service was confided. To him, comfortably installed at the ‘ Ship ’ Hotel, came the postmaster of Calais and the captain of the *Henri Quatre*, the French packet by which the mail had been brought over. After a little consultation, these gentlemen were clearly of opinion that the mail arrived intact at Calais, was sent thence, and arrived intact at Dover, was sent thence intact, and was violated on the road to London. Tending to the proof of this was a special circumstance.



When the mail arrived at Dover, it was so unusually heavy as to induce a Custom-house officer, who saw it landed, to regard it with suspicion; so he accompanied the men who bore it, from the French vessel to the packet-agent's office, that he might see it opened, and be satisfied that it contained nothing prohibited. The portmanteau was unbuckled, and its compartments were thrown open in the presence of this officer, of Sir Thomas Coates, the packet-agent, and of three other persons, all of whom were certain that the compartments of the bags were in a perfect state, and that the bags were then uncut.

“So far so good. The solicitor to the Post Office, journeying back to London, and taking up the threads of his case on the way, stopped at Canterbury, made a few casual inquiries, opened a regular official investigation, and received what he believed to be very important information. For it appeared that on the Sunday night of the robbery, four inside and three outside passengers left Dover by the mail-coach for London. The four insides were booked for London; one of the outsides was booked for Chatham, another for Canterbury, or as much further towards London as he pleased, the third outside intimated that he should only go as far as Canterbury. When the mail reached the ‘Fountain’ Inn, Canterbury, the outside passenger who was booked as far towards London as he pleased, got down and paid his fare, stating that he should go

no further; the passenger who was booked for Canterbury alighted at the same time; and the two walked away from the coach together.

“One of the mail-coach proprietors, who resided at Canterbury, happened to be looking at the mail while it was standing at the door on the evening in question, and observed two men, dressed as if they had just left the coach, crossing the street. They stood consulting together for a few minutes, and, after walking about fifty yards, stopped again, when a third man joined them. They all conversed for about a minute, and then separated; two of them went down the street on the road to London, the mail passed them, and almost immediately afterwards they returned up the street in the direction of the ‘Rose’ Hotel. The third man went into the coach-office, booked himself as an outside passenger for London, and went on by the mail. Shortly after the mail passed through Canterbury that night, two strangers coming from the direction in which the mail had gone, entered the ‘Rose’ Hotel, and ordered a chaise to London. On being asked whether they would change horses at Ospringe or Sittingbourn, they said it was immaterial so long as they got on quickly. The waiter who showed them into the sitting-room noticed that they had a small bag with them. They ordered some brandy-and-water, and shut themselves in—in the room, not the bag. After the lapse of a quarter of an hour the waiter, suddenly opening the

door to say that the chaise was ready, perceived various letters (at least twenty or thirty), and several small paper packets, lying on the table; the men were feeling the letters, holding them up to the candles, and otherwise examining their contents. They appeared much confused when the waiter entered the room, crammed the letters into their pockets, paid their bill, got into the chaise, and at once set off for town.

“The thieves were traced through different stages, until it was ascertained that they had been set down between six and seven o'clock on Monday morning near a watch-box in the Kent Road, and that, having paid the postboy, they then walked off towards Surrey Square.

So much notice was taken of the men at the ‘Rose’ Hotel, and at the places where they stopped to change horses and take refreshment on the road to town, that a description of their persons was procured, and the police communicated with. On hearing the description, the police at once considered that it implicated one Tom Partridge, and one of his associates, who had been concerned in most of the coach-robberies which had recently been committed; and private information having been obtained that these were really the men who had violated the mail, warrants were obtained, and Tom Partridge was ‘wanted.’ After a search of many weeks Tom Partridge was apprehended, and on the examination which he under-

went at Bow Street, was distinctly identified as one of the persons who booked an outside place at Dover by the mail of the evening in question, and as one of the men who were seen on the same evening at the 'Rose' Hotel examining letters and packets which lay open before them. On this evidence Mr. Tom Partridge was fully committed for trial.

“ From March till August Partridge lay in prison: immediately on his committal, he had strongly denied his guilt, and had made application to be admitted to bail; but his request was refused. On the 21st of August, 1827, the assizes for the Home Circuit being then held in Maidstone, there was more than usual excitement round the old court-house of that town. Very many witnesses were to be examined on the part of the Crown, among them some French gentlemen, clerks in the Paris Post Office, and officers of the packet, who had been staying at the principal hotel of Maidstone for some days, and at the expense of the prosecution. And above all else productive of interest was the prevalent belief that the whole case was one of extraordinary circumstantial evidence; that it would turn upon the nicest question of personal identity; and that the prisoner intended bringing forward undeniable proofs of his innocence.

“ The prisoner himself in the dock fronting the judge, a middle-sized stoutly-built man, with a queer humorous face, lighted by a twinkling arch blue eye. Not a bit

daunted, but apparently rather pleased by the universal gaze, he stood leaning over the front of the dock, playing with the bits of herbs which custom still retained there, keenly observant of all that transpired, but apparently fully trusting in his own resources.

“The prosecuting serjeant told the story briefly, pretty much as it has been here stated, and proceeded to call his witnesses. First came the French gentlemen. M. Etienne Bonheur, comptroller at the foreign office of the General Post Office, Paris, proved that he made up the mail for London on the evening of Friday, the 26th of January, that there was an Italian bag, that he handed them to M. Avier to despatch. M. Avier, M. Gustave d’Ortell, postmaster of Calais, Captain Margot of the *Henri Quatre* steamer, John Nash, the Custom House officer at Dover, and Sir T. Coates, the packet-agent, all deposed to the despatch and receipt of the mail in due course.

“The case for the prosecution was concluded, and the prisoner, called upon for his defence, humbly prayed that a written paper which he had prepared might be read aloud. The court assenting, the paper was handed to an officer, and was read aloud, to the following effect. In the first place, the prisoner denied any participation in the crime of which he was accused, and stated that in the month of January last he was travelling with a person of the name of Trotter, on business, in the counties of Somerset and Devon. That

on Monday, the 22nd of January, he and Trotter arrived at the 'George' Inn, Glastonbury, kept by Mr. Booth. That they left the 'George' the same day, and went to Mr. Baker's, who keeps an inn at Somerton, and thence in Mr. Baker's gig to Yeovil. That the prisoner, taking a fancy to the horse in this gig, sent word back to Mr. Baker that if he had a mind to sell it, he (prisoner) would meet him at the 'George' Inn, Glastonbury, on the ball-night, the Thursday following. That on this Thursday night the prisoner and Trotter duly arrived at the 'George,' bought Baker's horse for twelve guineas twelve shillings, borrowing the silver money from Booth, tried it on the Friday morning, and left it with Booth to get it into better condition. That he (prisoner) and Trotter left Glastonbury at half-past eleven on Saturday morning, the 27th, by the Exeter coach, which they quitted on the road about five miles from Tiverton, and walked on to that town. That at Tiverton they put up at the 'Three Tuns' Hotel, and being cold, they called for and had some hot egg-beer on their arrival; and that while at this hotel, having a wish to procure some clotted cream, they inquired of the waiter how they should carry it, when the waiter recommended them to have two tin cans for the purpose, which cans were procured and filled accordingly. That they stayed at the 'Three Tuns' during Saturday the 27th, and Sunday the 28th; and left on Monday the 29th, by the Bristol coach to Bridgewater.

“ This statement of the prisoner’s having been read aloud, he was called upon to corroborate it by evidence. Thereupon he summoned and produced in the witness-box, one after the other, Booth, the landlord of the ‘ George ’ at Glastonbury ; Baker, of whom he bought the horse ; Ellis, the waiter at the ‘ Three Tuns ’ at Tiverton, who produced the book containing the entries of the refreshment had by the prisoner—among them the hot egg-beer, the clotted cream, and the tins for carrying it ; and the chambermaid at the same inn. All of these persons exactly corroborated the prisoner’s statement, and all of them swore positively to his identity. After the evidence of the last witness the judge interposed and asked the Crown counsel whether he desired to press his case ? The serjeant turned to the Post Office solicitor, when several of the jury expressed themselves satisfied that the witnesses for the prosecution were mistaken, and that the prisoner was not one of the persons who had committed the robbery. Whereupon a verdict of acquittal was recorded ; and with a smiling face and a bow to the court, Mr. Tom Partridge walked out of the dock a free man.

“ Some two years after this trial, which gave rise to a vast amount of wonder as to how the Government could have been so mistaken as to prosecute an innocent man, the Post Office solicitor, wending his way

quietly along Bishopsgate Street to catch the Norwood coach at the 'Flower-Pot' Inn, was brushed against by a man going into a public-house, and looking up, saw that the man was Tom Partridge. Now, in the solicitor's leisure moments, which were few enough, he had often thought of Tom Partridge, and had puzzled his brain ineffectually for a solution of Tom Partridge's mystery. So now, having a few minutes to spare, he first satisfied himself that the man who had brushed against him was the veritable Tom, and then crossed the street and took a careful survey of the public-house into which Tom had vanished. As he stood looking up at the house Tom came out of the street-door, looked up, and called 'Hi!' whereupon, from an upper window of the house, appeared the head and shoulders of another Tom, an exact reproduction of the original Tom, middle-sized, stoutly built, with a queer humorous face lighted by a twinkling arch blue eye. The solicitor rubbed his eyes; but when he looked again, there were the two Tom Partridges, exactly alike, one on the pavement in the street, the other looking out of the third-floor window. Then both disappeared into the house, whence presently emerging both by the street-door, one pointed to some distant object, and the other started off up the street, the first returning into the public-house; each so exactly like the other that, when they separated, they looked like halves of one body.



“Next morning the solicitor was closeted for half an hour with one of the heads of the Post-Office department who had the official conduct of criminal cases; and shortly afterwards a confidential messenger was despatched with a letter to William Barker, otherwise known as Conkey Barker, otherwise as Bill the Nobbler, otherwise as sundry and divers flash personages.

“That evening Mr. La Trappe, of the General Post-Office, sat in the study of his private house in Brunswick Square. As the clock struck eight the servant entered and announced ‘a man.’ The man being admitted proved very velveteeny, slightly stably, and very bashful.

“‘Sit down, Barker,’ said Mr. La Trappe, pointing to a chair. ‘I want a little information from you; it can’t hurt anybody as the affair is bygone. Do you recollect the robbery of the Dover mail?’

“‘I should think so,’ said Barker, grinning.

“‘Ah!’ said Mr. La Trappe. ‘We tried a man named Tom Partridge for it, and he was acquitted on an alibi. He did it, of course?’

“‘Of course,’ said Barker.

“‘Ah!’ said Mr. La Trappe again, with perfect calmness; ‘he has a double, who went into Somerset and Devon at the same time, and worked the oracle for him?’

“‘Well! How *did* you find that out?’

“ ‘Never mind, Barker, how I found it out. What I want to know is—who is the double?’ ”

“ ‘Tom Partridge’s brother—old Sam, one year older nor Tom, and as like him as two peas. It was the best rig o’ the sort as ever was rigged. Old Sam had been out in Ameriky all his life, and when he first came back every one was talking about his likeness to Tom; you couldn’t know ’em apart. Fiddy, the fence, thought something might be made of this, and he planned the whole job—the egg-hot, and the cream, the tins, and the horse what he bought. Tom’s got that horse now, to drive in his shay-cart on Sundays.’ ”

“ ‘One more question, Barker,’ said the solicitor. ‘How was the robbery effected? The interior of the portmanteau could not have been cut unless it had been unbuckled and the compartments thrown open, and they could not possibly have done all that on the top of the coach. Besides, the guard stated he had fastened it in a very peculiar manner at Dover, and that the fastenings were in exactly the same state when he opened it in London.’ ”

“ ‘Ah! That was the best game of the lot,’ said Mr. Barker. ‘The job was done while the portmanteau was in the agent’s office at Dover, and where it lay from three o’clock on Sunday afternoon till between seven and eight in the evening. Tom Partridge and his pal, they opened the street-door with a skeleton

key. There was no one there, and they had plenty of time to work it.'

" ' And Tom Partridge's pal was— ? ' "

" ' Ah, that I can't say,' said Mr. Barker, looking straight into the air. ' I never heard tell o' *his* name.'

" About a twelvemonth afterwards that respectable mechanic, Mr. William Barker, was hanged for horse-stealing. Just before his execution he sent for Mr. La Trappe, and confessed that *he* had been Tom Partridge's accomplice in the robbery of the Dover mail. Mr. La Trappe thanked him for the information, but bore it like a man who could bear a surprise."

## CHAPTER IV.

### ACCOMPLISHED SWINDLERS.

#### § *Major Semple alias Lisle.*

THE career of this singular swindler, begging and borrowing impostor, was of so adventurous and remarkable a kind, as to excite wonder that a person of such gifts should have condescended to the petty shifts which had nearly led him to the gallows.

This man—who was also known as Lisle—entered the army and served in America. He was wounded, taken prisoner, and soon after released, retiring on a pension. He next took service with Frederick the Great, but did not remain with him long, returning to England in 1779, when he married a lady of good connections whom he met by chance at Harwich. We next find him in France, busy with the affairs of the notorious Duchess of Kingston, and whom he accompanied on her journey to St. Petersburg, when a new career opened for him. He entered the Russian army, was appointed captain by Prince Potemkin, and appears to have served with distinction, receiving

many honours from the Czar. However, he grew discontented, and in 1784 resigned his office.

But the next scene in his motley career offers a curious contrast. Of a sudden, and without any notice or graduated descent from his respectable position, we find him, in 1785, indicted for stealing a post-chaise! He contended, after the usual form in such cases, that he had merely *hired* it, and that it was only a civil contract, but, unluckily, he had sold the vehicle; so he was convicted and sentenced to seven years' transportation. Some favourable influences were brought to bear, and after being sent to the Woolwich hulks, on his way to a penal settlement, he received a pardon, on condition of his at once leaving the country.

We next find him in France as the friend of Pétion, Roland, and others of the Revolutionary party. He was present at Louis XVIth's trial, but soon after became obnoxious and was denounced as a spy to the Committee of Public Safety. He escaped with difficulty from the country and joined the allied armies, where he appears to have fought with distinction in various battles.

With his usual ill-fortune service seems to have brought him no particular advantage, and he was arrested at Augsburg, probably for some malpractices, but escaped to England. Here we find this soldier of fortune, by another turn, in custody at Bow Street,

charged with the contemptible offence of obtaining a shirt and two or three yards of calico and muslin on false pretences. Again the point was raised of its being merely a contract, but he was found guilty of obtaining the shirt by fraud, and he was again sentenced to seven years' transportation. Again was interest employed in his favour, among others Mr. Boswell and Edmund Burke exerted themselves but without avail, and he was despatched to New South Wales. On the way his adventures began afresh. A mutiny broke out in the vessel, of which he was one of the ring-leaders, which was quelled; but he and his brother delinquents, twenty-eight in number, were treated in summary fashion, placed in an open boat and sent adrift. After many perils they reached the Brazils, where, giving themselves out to be shipwrecked mariners, they were treated by the Spaniards with much kindness and hospitality. Semple was introduced as a Dutch officer of rank. But the mutineers having quarreled among themselves, betrayed the real state of the case. We now lose sight of him only to find him, in 1798, at Lisbon, where he was arrested by order of the English minister and sent off to Gibraltar. There he was suspected of being engaged in some conspiracy, when he was again seized and sent to Tangier. In 1799 he was brought back to England and despatched to Botany Bay.

Eleven years elapsed, and we find him once more

returned to England, where he took up the miserable rôle of begging for shillings, "doing," as it is called, small tradesmen. Thus, having ordered a small quantity of bacon to be sent to a particular house, he contrived to meet the messenger at the door, and sent him back for sixpen'orth of eggs—taking the other goods from him. It was then found that he did not live in the house. For this petty and contemptible trick he was, for the third time, sentenced and transported for seven years.

This finally disposed of him. But his whole story furnishes a curious contribution to the history of crime. There is a curious sketch of him in Angelo's Memoirs, exhibiting him in one of his begging rounds.

The fencing-master, who had generally contrived to see something of the seamy side of London and of London adventurers, was well acquainted with this unhappy creature, who might have sat for Jeremy Diddler. He introduced himself on the excuse of taking lessons in fencing, and having established this connection Angelo and his family found it almost impossible to shelve him off. The fencing-master gives his lively account of his tricks and devices :—

"In respect to borrowing money, however, he failed, though he tried the experiment. Pleasure being the order of the day, we had not enough to follow it up. Semple, who always stuck close to us, took care to

follow us home to our door, and walking in, stopped till dinner was placed on the table, when I said, 'Captain' (no assumed major then), 'will you take your dinner with us?' and though he always pretended to have an engagement, he *obligingly* put it off, and did us the *honour* to stop. In the evening, if we were going to Vauxhall, or elsewhere, he was sure to make one, and would have made our house his lodging, if I had not told him that all our beds were engaged, except my father's, and that room was always kept locked in his absence. Our spunging companion continued these intrusions for about three months, when suddenly he disappeared, without paying for his instructions, or anything else. To write of his various swindling cheats, so well-known, would be needless.

"The next time I spoke to him, which must have been twelve years after, was on board of the hulks at Woolwich. I was that day on a dinner party at Blackwall, with Lord Barrymore, his brother Cripplegate, and Lord Falkland. It was a Sunday evening, and I proposed, in order to pass away the time, to have a boat, and go on board one of the hulks; as an old *acquaintance* of mine was among the convicts, perhaps I could procure admittance without many inquiries. My proposal was speedily accepted, and we were soon alongside the hulk. As it was Sunday, they would not permit us to go on board for some time; on sending up my card to the lieutenant, who knew my name, we



were at length admitted. (Lord Barrymore and the others desired not to be known.) I then inquired for Captain Semple. The convicts were all below, it being just previous to their supper time. On each side of the deck there were a number of wooden bowls, filled with boiled peas (such as I have used when a boy for my pea-shooter), and if I had seen them in any other place, I should have imagined they were intended for the hogs.

“After waiting some time, Semple (who had probably seen me in the boat alongside, and had been dressing himself) came on deck, and looked tolerably clean. As soon as he saw me, he spoke to me in the most unceremonious manner, *sans façon*. It was, ‘How do you do?’ (calling my name aloud) ‘How are all your family?’ to the not small amusement of our party. Having satisfied our curiosity, and given a guinea to Semple, by Lord Barrymore’s desire, we took leave of the lieutenant, who politely offered us some grog. The whole party were much pleased at the strange interview with my old acquaintance, and when I approached them, they jokingly said, ‘Take care of your pockets;’ and threw out various hints about my connection with a convict. Two days afterwards, I received a fulsome letter from Semple, containing an eulogium on fencing, and many professions of the regard he had for my father. At the same time he requested me to send him some foils, etc.

“ Many years afterwards, when I was standing at the door of Old Slaughter’s coffee-house, Semple passed by, and, just at the time, a friend of mine, who was in the coffee-room, came to the door. When Semple was about to turn round the corner of Newport Street, he looked back, and saw us, as he imagined, watching him. The next day I received the following letter :—

“ ‘ SIR,—I have from my very early days been accustomed to feel attachment to every branch of your family,—in fact, I owe so much to your father, and *you* have also been kind to me, in my hour of adversity. If I have either acquired address in arms, or the exterior of a gentleman, it is to the lessons of your excellent father. Having said so much, I need not add, that it gives me excessive pain to address you in any other language but that of friendship. You cannot have forgot that Thursday, as I came up Saint Martin’s Lane, you were at the door of Old Slaughter’s coffee-house ; you perceived me, you entered the door, and, after I had passed, pointed me out to a person whom you brought with you from the coffee-room into the middle of the pavement. This is a sort of conduct I did not expect from a man bred in the first societies, and to which, however innocent you may think it, I cannot, must not submit. Had almost any man but the son of Angelo done it, I should have expressed my displeasure in the instant. I think you will do me the justice to believe, that the passiveness of my conduct

on this occasion, was the effect of no other motive than what I describe, and that it cannot be repeated. Do not, I request you, again expose yourself; and permit me to assure you that I still am, very much, sir,

“ ‘ Your obedient servant,

“ ‘ I. G. LISLE.

“ ‘ August 28th, 1802.’

“ By his signature of Lisle (degraded as his name, Semple, was) it appeared he had changed his appellation since his visit to the hulks. Of course I took no notice of this letter, but whenever we met, we gave each other a mutual look of *effronterie*. Nine years afterwards, I received another letter, which was the last :—

“ ‘ SIR,—Having, in a recent letter, explained to you my situation, though you were at that moment absent, understanding that you are now in town, and my miseries continuing in full force, let me now pray you to accord me the very little assistance then solicited, a few shillings. The sad urgency of my situation cannot be described; I am at this hour without a fire, and without a shirt. I will only add, that whatever is committed under a *sealed* envelope to the bearer, will safely reach me, and that I am, with respect,

“ ‘ Your obedient servant,

“ ‘ I. G. S. LISLE.

“ ‘ 4th February, 1811.’

“ I enclosed a crown to the poor devil in answer to his letter,—most probably falsehoods to create sym-

pathy. He took care never to appear *himself*, but had boys in different parts of the town to deliver his begging letters; and, judging from the numerous letters he could send in one day, if they made any sort of impression, I should think he never could have been in want of a fire, or a shirt, at all events, though perhaps he was obliged to forego his former luxurious way of living."

This was the age of adventures, of disguises, of ingenious counterfeits and devices; when there were great openings for gentlemen of versatility and talent in their profession. This will be seen from the career of another chevalier of industry whose course we shall next follow.

#### § "OLD PATCH."

In the year 1784, there was issued from the Bow Street office, by direction of Sir Sampson Wright, the blind magistrate's successor, the following proclamation:—

"PUBLIC OFFICE, BOW STREET.

"A FELONY.

"Whereas a woman answering the following description stands charged with felony; whoever will apprehend her, and bring her before Sir Sampson Wright, at the above office, shall receive 200*l.* reward upon her commitment.

"The said woman lately lived in a house, No. 3, on

the Terrace, Tottenham Court Road, by the name of Ann Polton. She then was dressed in a black silk gown, black cloak, and a black bonnet; she appears, or affects to be, very old and decrepid, though there is strong reason to believe that it is fictitious. She is rather above the middle size, thin face; and when she hired the above house, and until Monday last, usually wore clothes as above described, but on that day was dressed in a dark blue striped linen or cotton gown, black bonnet and cloak, a black handkerchief tied round her neck, a black patch on her chin, and another on her right cheek, and had a bundle tied in a white handkerchief, light-coloured hair in loose curls, without powder. She has lately been seen as affecting a desponding situation, in the fields in the above neighbourhood. *She is connected with a man who has appeared very aged and infirm, but, notwithstanding, hath been observed to walk very well when he supposed he was unnoticed.*

“ The man appears to be aged, about five feet seven or eight inches high, generally wearing a morning gown, with a cap over his face, and a large hat flapped; walks decrepid, with a stick, as if infirm, and wears spectacles; has several times walked down to the stables adjacent to the Terrace, and is the same person frequently before advertised, under different descriptions.

“ It is earnestly requested that all housekeepers in the several streets, &c., between the Middlesex Hospital

and the out-buildings towards Marylebone will give particular attention to this advertisement."

From this it would appear that the person "wanted" was the woman, but this is testimony to the skill of the principal operator, who had thus contrived to make himself appear as merely an agent. He was perhaps the most versatile and successful of the many professors of swindling that have appeared. He was possessed of boundless resources, and for years baffled the Bank of England, with all the forces of Bow Street at their back. His system was a dramatic one, consisting of a series of disguises and rapid changes of residence. His name was Charles Price, but he became known as "Old Patch" from his favourite disguise. When a child he would dress himself in his brother's clothes and steal articles of his father's, then selling them to Jews, thus causing his brother to be punished as the delinquent. This trait would have been worthy of Fielding's notice. When he was placed with a hosier in London, he one day presented himself at the shop dressed as a fine gentleman, and giving his name as the "Hon. Mr. Bolingbroke," ordered a large quantity of goods. These he was desired to deliver in his capacity of apprentice, and promptly pawned, bringing back word that "Mr. Bolingbroke" was out. He next visited Holland, where he got a place in a Dutch merchant's house, owing to a forged introduction, and fled from thence, carrying off his master's daughter.

His next victim was no less a person than the shrewd Samuel Foote, who would assuredly have ridiculed on the stage any one as gullible as he was now to show himself. Mr. Foote was caught by this advertisement, which appeared in 1775.

“WANTED, a partner of character, probity, and extensive acquaintance, upon a plan permanent and productive. Fifty per cent. without risk may be obtained. It is not necessary that he should have a knowledge of the business, but must possess a capital of between 500*l.* and 1000*l.* P.S.—None but principals, and *those of liberal ideas*, will be treated with.” This was a scheme for a brewery, and Foote actually gave his money. We are enabled to know what tempted Foote by a curious circumstance. It was the opening for profit furnished by the “extensive acquaintance,” for Foote seems to have “pushed” the beer among his friends. It was of execrable quality, and at one house the servants “struck” and refused to drink it. But a black was so delighted with Foote—who was entertaining the guests with his sallies—that he came down to his fellows and declared “that he *would* drink Mr. Foote’s beer, he was so comical.” Notwithstanding, all the capital vanished and Foote withdrew. His partner had now the impudence to suggest his joining him in a bakery. Foote replied, “As you brewed so you may bake, but I’m cursed if you can’t bake as you have brewed.” This good jest, however, was dear at 500*l.*

Price next appeared as a Methodist preacher, as a marriage agent, swindling as he went along. He then tried other breweries, went to Germany, where he made 300*l.* by a smuggling expedition. But it was not until the year 1780 that he started on his grand and elaborate scheme of forgery. In this year the authorities were perfectly bewildered by the repeated complaints that poured in from all sides. In every quarter an old decrepit gentleman with the muffled throat and a patch over his eye, appeared and disappeared, carrying off a quantity of plunder. Such was the cleverness with which he contrived these Protean changes.

The late Walter Thornbury, in his favourite graphic style, has related the story of this strange being. From his "Old Stories Re-told" I take the concluding portion of old Patch's career, pruning away all the florid, and perhaps imaginative details which the writer added by way of seasoning.

"Mr. Levy, a Portuguese Jew diamond-merchant of Lincoln's Inn Fields, had advertised a parcel of very valuable diamonds for sale, and received a letter from a Mr. Schutz. This person, who wrote a crabbed, shaky, and crippled hand, begged the Portuguese merchant would bring them to his lodgings.

"The Portuguese merchant wrote that Mr. Schutz might call upon him and see the diamonds if he liked, but that it was not his habit to wait on purchasers.



At the hour fixed, a hackney-coach, containing Mr. Schutz, duly stopped at the jewel-merchant's house. He apologized for not getting out of the coach on account of his lameness; so the diamonds were brought out to him in their cases.

“Mr. Schutz seemed a poor, sickly, paralytic old man, and was bundled up in a large black camlet surtout, the broad cape fastened up over his chin. He wore the long curling wig and large cocked-hat of a country clergyman. His face jaundiced by age. For support he leaned on a large round ivory-topped cane. He bought the diamonds at about five thousand pounds. Next day, between twelve and one, he would call for the diamonds and pay for them in bank-notes.

“For those jewels Mr. Schutz never came. At the hour appointed, Sir Sampson Wright (the magistrate) and several other gentlemen waited on the expectant diamond-merchant in Lincoln's Inn Fields, told him that Mr. Schutz was a swindler, and that two Bow Street officers were then waiting for him at the shoe-shop in Oxford Street.

“At that very time, Mr. Pearson, a king's messenger, was sent with despatches to Lord North, who was then at Dover. On arriving at Dartford, Mr. Pearson, much to his vexation, found the only pair of horses had just been ordered out by an old gentleman who seemed in a great hurry. Pearson displayed his badge—the silver greyhound—and offered the old

gentleman a seat in his chaise as far as Sittingbourne. The offer was accepted. He had a large green tea-canister secured by a padlock. The road was, however, rough, and the chaise jolted so violently that down went the green tea-canister, and out tumbled—not tea, but a flood of golden guineas, at which the king's messenger secretly wondered, but said nothing.

“On his return to town, Mr. Pearson found handbills in circulation offering rewards from the Bank of England for the apprehension of an old forger named Schutz. No doubt that Schutz and the old gentleman with the green tea canister full of guineas were one and the same; he at once informed the Secretary of State, who told Sir Sampson Wright. The solicitor of the Bank of England, with witnesses and officers, were at once sent to follow Schutz, the forger, to Calais, carrying credentials from the Secretary of State to the Minister of France, requesting the surrender of the delinquent. At Calais, a Mr. Price, who had been formerly a partner in a brewery with Samuel Foote, the actor, generously offered his services to the officers to watch Schutz till the lieutenant of police could hear from Paris.

“Soon after this occurrence, a man of business stopped a London merchant one day on 'Change, and presented him with a letter from an Amsterdam correspondent of the house, mentioning that he had been recently

defrauded of one thousand pounds by a rascal named Trevor, who frequented the London 'Change, and requesting his aid to recover part or the whole. The friend volunteered his advice as to how the trap was to be best laid and baited for Trevors.

“ ‘To-morrow, sir,’ he said, ‘he will most likely be upon 'Change, in the Dutch walk. He dresses in a red surtout and a white wig. He wears square-toed shoes with small buckles, and the rest of his dress is as plain as a Quaker's. Your best way will be to accost him, and get into conversation about the commerce of Amsterdam. Pretend he can be of service to you, and ask him home to dinner. When the cloth is gone, break the business, show him the Dutch letter I brought over, and inform him that, unless he instantly refunds the whole or part of the money, you will on the morrow expose the matter to the principal City merchants.’

“Mr. E. took the advice of his shrewd friend, met the man described in the place expected, and led him home to dinner. The cloth removed, Mr. E. made the agreed signal to his wife and the ladies; they at once rose and retired. Then Mr. E. began to threaten a ruinous exposure.

“The swindler seemed overwhelmed with fear. He begged not to be exposed on 'Change, he offered five hundred pounds down if Mr. E. would cease all further proceedings. Mr. E. readily consented. Mr. Trevor

at once produced a thousand-pound note, for which he requested change. Not having sufficient cash in the house, Mr. Trevor proposed a cheque on Mr. E.'s banker, and having received that, left the house in a state of the utmost penitence and mortification.

“ Mr. E. the next morning discovered the thousand-pound note to be a forgery. He rushed to the Bank to stop payment, but found that a porter, followed by a tall thin woman, had obtained notes for the draft full four hours before.

“ A short time before, Mr. Spillsbury, a chemist, of Soho Square, found a card in the hall with the name of Wilmot on it. The next evening Mr. Spillsbury received a note requesting him to call on Mr. Wilmot at half-past five o'clock that evening, as he wished to give an order for drops. Mr. Spillsbury went, and being shown in by a smart lad in livery, found Mr. Wilmot to be a decrepid old man wrapped in a large camlet great-coat. He had a slouched hat on, the big brim of which was bent downwards on each side of his head; he wore green spectacles, a green silk shade (hanging from his hat), and a large bush wig. A piece of red flannel rose from his chin. To complete this remarkable dress, the old man's legs were swathed in flannel. Mr. Wilmot instantly began to explain that, having had a tooth clumsily drawn, he wore the flannel to prevent cold. He then praised the drops of Spillsbury, and alluded to the innumerable cures men-



*CHA<sup>s</sup>. PRICE in his usual Dress.*



*CHA<sup>s</sup>. PRICE in Disguise.*

*as described in the Public Papers, vide Page 13 of these Memoirs.*

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tioned in the advertisements, &c. The druggist left with the promise of a large order. A week after, Mr. Wilmot's boy called at Spillsbury's, requesting two guineas' worth of drops, and change for a ten-pound note. A few days after, Mr. Spillsbury heard from Sir Sampson Wright that Mr. Wilmot's bank-note was a forgery, and that the forger had decamped. Soon after this, the chemist met, at a coffee-house which he frequented, a Mr. Price, formerly a brewer and keeper of a lottery-office: the same busy man of the world, in fact, who had met the solicitor of the Bank of England at Calais, and did his best to aid him in apprehending the diamond thief, Schutz. Over their chocolate, the two discussed the forgery. The chemist expressed a little surprise at the extreme neatness of the handwriting. Mr. Price, a simple creature, stared through his spectacles, and kept constantly ejaculating,—

“ ‘Lack-a-day, good Gad! who could believe such knavery could exist? What, and did the Bank actually refuse payment, sir?’ ”

“Some considerable time before Mr. Spillsbury's loss, a lad employed by a musical instrument maker in the Strand, wanting another place, answered an advertisement dated from the Marlborough Street Coffee-house, Carnaby Market. One day, just as it was dusk, a man came and called him to his coach, as the old gentleman who had advertised desired to speak with him.

On getting into the coach, he found a very tall thin man, nearly seventy years of age, dressed in a camlet surtout, buttoned close up over his chin; he was apparently gouty, for his legs were huge bundles of flannel, and his feet were hidden in clumpy square-toed shoes. A broad-brimmed hat was drawn down low over his forehead, and a large black patch covered his left eye, so that the old gentleman's prominent nose, deep sunken right eye, and a small part of his right cheek, were alone visible. He had an incessant faint hectic cough which greatly distressed and fatigued him. Finding the lad honest and frank, he told him that he was guardian to a whimsical young nobleman down in Bedfordshire. On the lad's (Samuel's) master coming to the coach door and giving him a good character, Mr. Brank (the advertiser), of No. 59, Titchfield Street, Oxford Street, engaged him at eighteen shillings a week. On going to that address, Samuel saw Mr. Brank, and he still kept the patched side of his face turned towards the lad; such being the old man's constant peculiarity. He told him that his young master was a prodigal, and unfortunately a great dabbler in those deceitful and alluring bubbles, lottery-tickets. The lad was to buy, at his own expense, a drab livery, turned up with red, and to call on a certain day and hour. On keeping his appointment, old Mr. Brank told him that the thoughtless young lord had just sent letters again



requesting the purchase of lottery-tickets. He then gave Samuel a twenty-pound and a forty-pound note, and sent him with the twenty pounds to purchase an eight-guinea chance at an office in the Haymarket, and with the forty pounds to purchase the same class of chance at an office at the corner of Bridge Street, Westminster. Samuel had canvas bags given him so as to keep the different shares and change distinct. On his way to meet his master at the Parliament Street Coffee-house, Mr. Brank hailed him from the other side of the road, commending him for his speed and diligence. He was then sent to Charing Cross, and King Street and York Street, Covent Garden, to purchase more chances and change more notes in the same careful manner. In York Street, by a mere coincidence, his master again met him, was pleased to meet him, and taking him into the coach, drove him to Cheapside to change four hundred pounds' worth more of notes in the lottery-offices round the Exchange. For many days this went on, Samuel always observing that whenever he entered an office a lady stepped out from a coach behind Mr. Brank's, and followed him in. This lady remained as long as Samuel remained, and then walked out, purchasing nothing.

“ Four days after, Samuel, being arrested, was employed by Mr. Bond, the clerk at Bow Street, to help to apprehend the old fox, his master. On receiving a

message to meet his master at Will's Coffee-house at a particular hour, it was agreed that Samuel should go as usual, followed at a distance by Moses Morant, an officer, dressed as a porter, carrying a knot on his shoulder, and by Mr. Bond, dressed as a lady.

“The plan succeeded at first. A porter had just called to know if Samuel had been there. Samuel instantly went back and told the lady. Mr. Brank, watching this from a hackney-coach, at once scented mischief, and drove safely off.

“His last trick had been played on a retired grocer, named Roberts, at Knightsbridge, whose friendship he had gained, and to whom he had represented himself as a stockbroker. Roberts, without consciousness of the fact, had been used by Price to change his forged notes. He had represented to Roberts that an old friend of his, a Mr. Bond—a retired broker, who had made an enormous fortune in the alley—wished himself and a trusty friend to become his executors, having no relations living except an old maiden sister. With management, Price said, all the immense property of the old man—who lived in that singularly retired part of the world, Union Court, Leather Lane, Holborn—would fall into the hands of his executors.

“On an appointed day and hour, Roberts was to meet Price at Mr. Bond's. On arriving there, he found Price had had a business appointment at the City Coffee-house; but the lady of the house showed



PRICE the SWINDLER.



him up stairs to Mr. Bond: a decrepid failing old man, buried in a great chair, with his legs on another, a nightcap on his head, and his chin and mouth covered with flannel. Mr. Bond, with many feeble coughs, lamented Price's absence, and praised that gentleman's honour, honesty, and integrity; above all, his choice of a brother executor. After two or three visits to Mr. Bond, but never with Price, the old gentleman made his will, and put down Roberts, the executor, for such a large amount, that, on the strength of it, Price obtained nearly one thousand pounds in cash from Roberts, and bonds for two hundred pounds more.

“Price had also, disguised as an old man, succeeded in getting change for six forged fifty-pound notes from Roberts's brother, a grocer in Oxford Street, with whom he had scraped an acquaintance. On the notes being stopped, Roberts brought an action against the bankers, and actually paid Price for his zeal in obtaining witnesses for the defence and during the trial, at which he (Price) himself had the unblushing audacity to attend.

“For some weeks before these forgeries, a corpulent man, of about fifty, named Powel, had repeatedly called and pledged articles of value at the shop of Mr. Aldus, a pawnbroker, in Berwick Street. On the last occasion he had passed a forged note with many altered indorsements. One indorsement, by accident left entire, enabled the Bank to trace the note to Mr. Aldus, who

had already had suspicion of the gentleman. The Pawnbrokers' Act being then in agitation, Mr. Aldus entertained a suspicion that Mr. Powel was an informer, who was going to inform against him, and bring *qui tam* actions against him for taking usurious interest. He had, therefore, employed a spy to track him home; but the spy had always lost him in the neighbourhood of Portland Street, or near a mews in Tottenham Street. The runners were for instantly searching the two suspicious places near the rogue's burrow; for they were now sure that Price and Powel were the same man.

“On the 14th January, 1786, the keen-eyed man in the tie-wig, ruffle shirt, and buckle shoes entered a bin in Aldus's shop, and tapped the counter gently with his tasselled cane. Mr. Aldus at once gave the fatal signal. *Click!* the gin closed; through the swinging door strode Thomas Ting, Bow Street officer, and said he wanted speak to Mr. Powel a moment, in Mr. Aldus's parlour.

“Mr. Powel was angry and surprised. Who was Ting? What was Ting's business? Ting was ready to tell him in Mr. Aldus's parlour. Mr. Powel grew violent, and swore. He declared Ting wanted to rob him.

“At this moment Mr. Clark entered, and instantly said,—

“‘How do you do, Mr. Price?’

“ At this, Mr. Powel turned white. He requested leave to go himself and break the news to his wife, who lodged at Mr. Bailey’s, a pastrycook’s, in Portland Street.

“ He even offered Ting the 115*l.* (chiefly in notes) as a security for his immediate return. Ting refused the bribe, and led Mr. Price to Sir Sampson Wright’s, still pressed to take the 115*l.* At Bow Street, Price was indignant and violent. He accused Mr. Bond, the clerk, of dislike to him on account of some old affair about a disputed lottery-ticket, and he even accused Abraham Newland, the venerated old cashier of the Bank, of antipathy towards him. As for Sir Sampson, he told him that it was needless to run through his history. They knew well enough who he was, and if, although he was innocent, he had to submit to a trial, he would reserve his defence till then. Upon this, Mr. Charles Jealous and trusty Ting bundled Price into a hackney coach, and, proud of their snared fox, drove him off to the Tothill Fields Bridewell.

“ Determined to run through the whole gamut of fraud, this versatile rascal began a system of matrimonial advertisements; of which the following is a specimen, from a paper of 1757:—

“ ‘ To gentlemen of character, fortune, and honour, who wish to engage for life with a lady who possesses the above qualities in a very eminent degree. Her person, in point of elegance, gives precedence to none.

Her mind and manners are highly cultivated, her temper serene, mild, and affable, and her age does not exceed twenty-two. Any gentleman who answers the above address may direct a letter to A. Z., at the Bedford Head, Southampton Street, Strand; and if their *morals* and situation in life are approved, they will then be waited on by a person who will procure the parties an interview.'

"His assistant in these schemes was a Mrs. Poultney, alias Hickerlingill, his wife's aunt, who had become his mistress. Their house was in Red Lion Street, Clerkenwell; but they had also rooms in Charles Street, St. James's Square, where the accomplished lady exhibited as an Irish giantess. Their first dupe was a rich young fool, named Wigmore, just fresh from college, full of Latin and void of common sense. The gull, having paid fifty guineas, was allowed to see the old clergyman, the lady's uncle and guardian—Price himself in disguise—and was promised an interview, which never took place.

"In 1778, he started a fraudulent lottery-office in King Street, Covent Garden. A Mr. Titmus, who kept a cane-shop in Pimlico, having bought a ticket of Price which came up the eighth of a 2000*l.* prize, was refused payment, although he proved his right by the entry in the Whitehall books. Clark, an officer of Bow Street, instantly had a handbill printed exposing the fraud, and, going to Mr. Price, told him that 10,000



of those were then being worked off, to be distributed on 'Change and in every part of London, but chiefly daily at Price's own door. Price paid the money under protest, and then wrote to Sir John Fielding, the magistrate, declaring Mr. Titmus had threatened to murder him and set fire to his house. He then decamped with the 2000*l.* prize, and the mob the same night surrounded the house and broke every pane of glass in the place. The following year he started a second sham lottery-office in Butcher Row, Temple Bar, and rivalled Mr. Christie, the then pre-eminent auctioneer, in the grandiloquence of his advertisements.

“It was about the year 1780 that he began his vast scheme of forgery. He took the most extraordinary precautions to prevent discovery. He made his own paper with the special water-mark; he engraved his own plates; he made his own ink. He generally had three lodgings—the first for his wife, the second for his mistress, and the third for the negotiation of his notes; his wife and mistress being kept ignorant of each other's existence. He never returned home in disguise; he never negotiated notes except in disguise. The people he used as his instruments never saw him but in disguise, and were never lost sight of by his mistress, who always followed him in a hackney-coach to receive his disguise when done with. In one fact all, however, agreed—that all the forged notes could be traced to *one man*, always disguised.

“ In 1780, the Bank offered 200*l.* for Old Patch’s apprehension. The bill described him and his mistress in the following way :—

“ ‘ He appears about fifty years of age, about five feet six inches high, stout made, very sallow complexion, dark eyes and eyebrows, speaks in general very deliberately, with a foreign accent ; has worn a black patch over his left eye, tied with a string round his head ; sometimes wears a white wig, his hat flapped before, and nearly so at the sides, a brown camlet great coat, buttons of the same, with a large cape, which he always wears so as to cover the lower part of his face ; appears to have very thick legs, which hang over his shoes as if swelled ; his shoes are very broad at the toes, and little narrow old-fashioned silver buckles, black-stocking breeches, walks with a short crutch-stick with an ivory head, stoops, or affects to stoop, very much, and walks slow, as if infirm ; he has lately hired many hackney coaches in different parts of the town, and been frequently set down in or near Portland Place, in which neighbourhood it is supposed he lodges.

“ ‘ He is connected with a woman who answers the following description : She is rather tall and genteel, thin face and person, about thirty years of age, light hair, rather a yellow cast in her face, and pitted with the small-pox, a downcast look, speaks very slow, sometimes wears a coloured linen jacket and petticoat, and sometimes a white one, a small black bonnet and



PATCH PRICE.



a black cloak, and assumes the character of a lady's-maid.'

"This Price was Old Patch himself, Wigmore, Schutz—all. He, and he alone, had planned and worked these endless forgeries.

"On his second examination, Patch laughed at all accusations, and expressed his hope that 'the old hypocrite would be taken.' Assured that none of his dupes could recognize him, he even sent for many of them to prove his innocence. One sharp waiter from a city coffee-house, however, swore boldly to him. Price asked, unthinkingly, how he knew him. The man replied, 'I will swear to your eyes, nose, mouth, and chin;' and the next day the mother of one of his servant-boys swore also to his mouth and chin. From that moment Price lost hope, and said he was betrayed; but he engaged an attorney, and arranged his defence, his plea being that the alteration of the teller's ticket was only a fraud. One night, when he sat over his wine with Mr. Fenwick, the governor of Tothill Fields, he pulled a ten-pound note out of his fob, and, ridiculing the carelessness of the searchers, left the note wrapped round the stopper of the decanter, as if in assertion of his powers of trickery.

"On the Sunday before the day fixed for his committal Price borrowed a Bible of the governor, and prayed with his weeping wife for five hours. On the day before, he had told his son to bring him two gim-

lets to fasten up the door, as the people of the prison came into his room earlier than he wished, and while he was writing private letters.

“At seven next morning, an old female servant, going into the prisoner’s room, saw Old Patch in his flannel waistcoat standing by the door. She said, ‘How do you do, sir?’ Patch made no answer. At that moment his body swung round gently in the draught. He had hung himself from two hat-screws (strengthened by gimlets) behind the door.

“Under the old forger’s waistcoat were found three papers. The first was a series of meditations from the Book of Job, some of them terribly indicative :

“‘Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived.’

“‘His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate. He made a pit and digged it: he is fallen into the ditch which he made.’

“The second paper was a petition to the king, praying protection for his wife and eight innocent children, on the plea of the Danish pamphlet and his *own innocence*. The third paper was a letter to the governor of the prison and his wife, thanking them for their humanity and for their many and great civilities, and complaining of the legal tyranny that had destroyed his own reason and ruined his family.”

A razor was found in his coat pocket.

Price was buried as a suicide in the cross-road near the prison soon after his death ; but a few days later, the empty shell was found beside the grave. The widow had removed the body.

Only one secret of Price's labyrinthine career remains inscrutable, and that is how the immense sum he stole (2000*l.*) was spent, as he always lived in obscure lodgings, and neither drank nor gambled.

#### § *A Successful Ruse.*

Here may be mentioned one of those dramatic cases which so rarely occur, and which took place in 1774. In August of this year, one of the usual executions was about to take place at Tyburn, and two malefactors, Waine and Barnet, were actually on the cart, about to be "turned off," as it was called—a phrase often jocularly used in reference to marriages, though few think that it originally described the fatal push from the cart given by the executioner. At this critical moment, a man was seen eagerly making his way to the gallows through the crowd, insisting that he had something of the utmost importance to communicate to the sheriff. Addressing the under-sheriff Reynolds, he said his name was Amos Merritt, and that he knew that the culprit Madan was innocent. He was then called on to look at the man, and to repeat aloud what he had said. He persisted in his statement, but did

not accuse himself. So earnest was he that the execution of this criminal was suspended until the return of a messenger, despatched to inform the Home Secretary of the occurrence, who at once sent back a reprieve. The fortunate criminal was taken back to the jail amid the acclamations of the crowd, who were delighted at such an escape. Merritt was then arrested and brought to Bow Street office, where he was examined by Mr. Addington, the magistrate, to whom he confessed that he was the person who had committed the robbery of which Madan was convicted. Madan was accordingly pardoned and released. Strange to say, no proof could be obtained beyond this confession, and they were obliged to let him go.

Not three months later there was brought up before the justice this very Madan, who was accused of being concerned in a most daring burglary at Highgate. With a band of armed accomplices he had attacked a house, and forced his way in, using threats of murder. As so often happens in cases of crime, the narrow escape he had acted only as encouragement instead of warning. He was tried in due course, and executed.



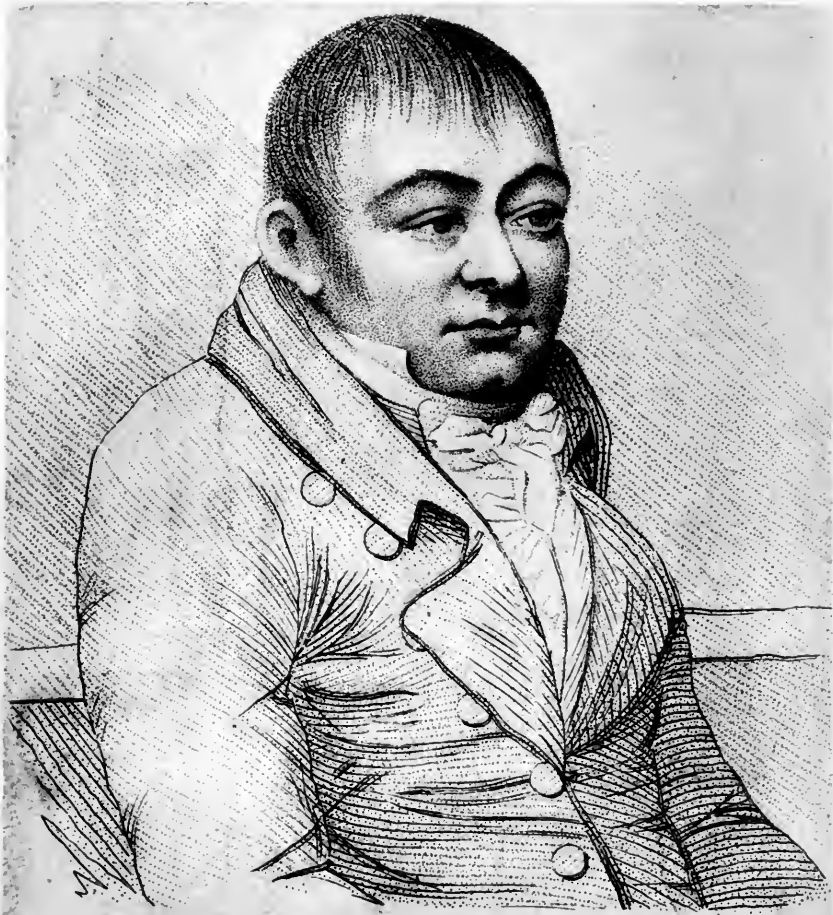
## CHAPTER V.

### VARIOUS MURDERS AND ROBBERIES.

#### § *The Murder of Mr. Blight.*

IN 1805 a murder was committed, which, without having any distinguishing features, like so many others, excited prodigious interest and sympathy. Mr. Blight was a respectable ship-breaker down at Rotherhithe—a business which he had carried on with much success. In 1803 a man from Devonshire, named Richard Patch, presented himself for employment, which he obtained readily, as two of his family were already in the ship-breaker's service. Patch's father had been a smuggler; his son had been a butcher—a trade that has furnished a good many subjects to the gallows. Mr. Blight found Patch useful in his business, and agreed with him for 40*l.* a year, and board and lodging. Afterwards the salary was increased to 100*l.* a year, and he was to board himself. Patch being a very frugal man, and steady, suffered his salary to accumulate in his master's hands till it amounted to 250*l.* Mr. Blight having a very high

opinion of Patch, offered him a third of the business for 1200*l.* the previous summer, which he agreed to, saying he could procure 1000*l.* from the sale of an estate he possessed near Exeter. He then enjoyed a third share of the business from the 31st of August, and gave Mr. Blight a note or check for 1000*l.* upon a respectable tradesman in Bermondsey, which, not being regularly paid, brought Mr. Blight from Margate; and it is supposed he intended to insist upon the payment of it on the night he was shot, or the following day. It turned out that all Patch could muster was a sum of 250*l.* On February 22nd, after this return from Margate, he was having tea with Mr. Blight, when one of the servants heard her master get up to go into the counting-house. She heard him shut the door of that place after him; and almost immediately after she saw the flash, and heard the report of a gun or pistol. Mr. Blight came out of the back parlour saying he had been shot, and leaned on the kitchen table. Patch then returned, and offered every assistance in his power to the deceased. Medical aid was sent for, but he died next day. Patch's account was that, on the evening of the day when Mr. Blight had gone to Margate, he, with the maid, remained in his house; and while she went to get some oysters for his supper, a shot was fired through the shutters into the parlour where he sat, which shattered a part of the sash, and dashed a splinter of a venetian blind at his neck. He



**RICHARD PATCH.**



mentioned the circumstance to Mr. Blight on his return, and advised him to employ a man to watch the house and yard, but Mr. Blight would not do it. As Patch told the maid, he had gone out across the yard, when he heard the report of a pistol, and, running to the house, found that Mr. Blight had been shot. Notwithstanding this plausible story, some Bow Street officers went down to Greenland Dock, to the residence of the late Mr. Blight, and took Richard Patch, with Hester Kitchenor, his servant, into custody. They underwent a private and separate examination before Mr. Justice Graham at Bow Street, in order to find out whether they were concerned in the murder of Mr. Blight. The account which Patch has given of his pecuniary transactions with Mr. Blight were found to be contradictory and evasive.

The ingenious rascal had prepared carefully for the sad event. It was proved that when Mr. Blight was at Margate, Patch had sent the servant out for oysters, and as she returned she heard the report of a gun. He greeted her with "O Hester, I have been shot at." "The Lord forbid," said the woman. They then looked for the ball, but it could not be found. After the murder, one of his suggestions was that the murderer had concealed himself in an old vessel which was lying off the wharf. The men went to examine, and found that the old vessel was moored far off in the pool, and was inaccessible owing to the mud.

Such excitement was caused at the trial that crowds gathered round the court at five in the morning, and so invaded the court that it was with difficulty the counsel and others could find seats. Such great personages as the Russian Ambassador, the Duke of Orleans, the Duchesses of Sussex and Cumberland, with a large number of the nobility, were present. A special box even was fitted up for the Royal Family!

Patch was found duly guilty, and sentenced, his body, according to a common custom, directed to be consigned to the surgeons for dissection. To the last moment he repelled all attempts to get him to confess. When the cap was actually drawn over his face, and as he was still being pressed, he drew himself back with much impatience, the spectators fancying that he wished to break his neck, and thus anticipate the hangman. The sheriff, however, with professional *nonchalance*, hastily approached him. "My good friend," he cried, "what are you about?" "They then conversed for about a minute and a half, during which time he no doubt set himself right in the official's mind."

#### § *Robbery of Lady Downshire's Jewels.*

In 1813 the papers were filled with an account of the sensational "Robbery of the Marchioness of Downshire's Jewels," which, however, were recovered. The house was entered owing to the unintentional assist-



MRS. BLIGHT.





ance of the lamplighter, who was in the habit of leaving his ladder against the wall of her ladyship's house, secured by a chain. The thief had made use of this convenient aid. At Bow Street there was much excitement when it was known that the noble lady was to appear and give her evidence, and she was attended to the court by an escort. This was to be a brilliant day for the Office. About twelve o'clock the noble marchioness arrived, accompanied by the Duke of Sussex. The latter took his seat on the left of Mr. Read, the examining magistrate. The Duke of Gloucester entered about a quarter before one. There were also present the Marchioness of Salisbury, Lady M. Cecil, Earl of Sandwich, Earl Harcourt, Lord Whitworth, the Duke of Dorset, Lord Crewe, Earl Talbot, &c. The noble marchioness gave evidence as to the fact of her house being broken open and robbed, described the property stolen, and identified the different articles that had been recovered by the exertions of Mr. Adkins, the Governor of the House of Correction, and his brother the officer.

The robber, it seems, was a man of extraordinary gifts in his profession, and was named Joseph Richardson. His extraordinary resemblance to another great depredator, Napoleon Bonaparte, was remarked by every one. His career was truly astonishing.

Some time before he committed a great burglary in Lancashire, for which he was lodged in the New

Bailey prison in Manchester, and was confined in a cell which was secured by cast iron bars. He contrived to have a tailor's goose brought in to him ; his object was to break the iron bars with it, but he was afraid to use it, on account of the noise it would make ; but at length he hit upon the stratagem of striking the bars with the goose exactly at the time a very large clock there was striking the hour ; and, after encountering a variety of other difficulties, he at length effected his escape, and was not heard any more of till he was taken into custody for breaking open and robbing the houses of the Earl of Besborough and Lord Crewe, for which he was committed to the House of Correction, Coldbath Fields, where he was confined in a cell, in the upper part of the prison ; but being a stone-mason by trade, he contrived to take up a stone of the floor and worked his way through into the hemp-room, from thence into the yard and garden, when he fastened some stones to some ropes which he procured in the oakum room and platted together ; he then contrived to throw them to the top of the wall of the prison, where there is a *chevaux de frise* ; the stones hung to the iron spikes sufficiently long to enable him to raise himself three times several yards ; but falling each time, he found himself much injured, and spit blood. He was about to return to his cell in despair, when he discovered a ladder locked and chained, both of which he broke, and ascended to the top of the wall, and

effected his escape, about two months ago, between five and six o'clock in the morning, after an exertion of upwards of five hours ; since which time he is supposed to have committed six burglaries. Soon after his escape from this prison Mr. Adkins, the governor, received information that he frequently went to a shoemaker's in the neighbourhood of the Seven Dials. He accordingly directed Becket, one of the turnkeys, to watch the shoemaker's house ; and on the 6th inst., about ten at night, he saw Richardson approaching him, near the corner of Tower Street, disguised in two great coats. He turned down Tower Street ; and after walking a few yards he looked behind him, and observing Becket following him, he threw off his coats and set off running ; but Becket gaining ground on him, he threw his hat at him, supposed to be for the purpose of striking him in the eyes ; but Becket still pursued him till he got into Little Red Lion Street, when a man coming out of a public-house, ran against him and by accident knocked him down. Becket then seized him, and Richardson was so extremely agitated at the instant, that he actually did not know Becket, and asked what he wanted with him ; Becket secured him and took him into a public-house, where, upon searching, he found on him notes to the amount of 523*l.*, which he offered to give to Becket if he would let him go. Becket, however, refused to accept the bribe, and conveyed him to the House of Correction. On his

arrival there, the keeper said, " Well, Richardson, I am glad to see you back, I fear you have been doing a deal of mischief since you have been out; from the way in which the Marchioness of Downshire's robbery was committed, I suspect you were in that." Richardson replied, " Master, you have behaved so well to me, I will not tell you an untruth; I acknowledge I was in that robbery, and I will tell you all about it." The governor then asked him, if any, or the whole of the property could be recovered? He replied it could, if the keeper would accompany him to a Mr. Joseph's, as he could neither tell the name of the street nor the number of the house where he lived. The keeper agreed, and went without delay in a coach with him, accompanied by Becket, and another of the turnkeys. They proceeded as directed by Richardson, to Chandler Street, Grosvenor Square, and gave the private signal at the door of the house occupied by Joseph, a Jew; the door was opened by Joseph. A light being procured, Mrs. Joseph was asked for two diamond rings which Richardson said she had, and they were part of the property stolen from the Marchioness of Downshire's house. She positively denied having them; the house was searched, but the rings were not found. The Josephs, however, were admitted as evidence against Richardson and the prisoners who were concerned in the burglary.

The Governor of the House of Correction,

Adkins, had a brother, who was at Bow Street, and who, himself, became governor of one of the prisons—the Warwickshire County Jail—which post he held for thirty years. He died so recently as 1860. A solicitor who has left some pleasant recollections of the Midland Circuit, describes his person, and knew him intimately. “Adkins was a small, compact, clean-made man, extremely active, and known as ‘The Little Ferret,’ from his activity in his profession. As I often dined at his hospitable table, he would relate different adventures he had gone through. Had his talent been that way, he might have made a very amusing volume of his hairbreadth escapes. He was usually in attendance in the lobby of the House of Commons during the sitting of Parliament, and was close at hand when Spencer Percival was shot by Bellingham. He also arrested Walsh, a member of Parliament, who had committed robberies of trust-moneys, of which he was the custodian, to a very great amount, particularly as regarded Sir Thomas Plomer, formerly Master of the Rolls. Walsh had fears he was suspected; and in order to deceive his enemies he attended the House of Commons, and having made a long speech from his place in Parliament, quitted the House, and disguised himself in the clerical garb, posted down to Falmouth, intending to leave the country. But Adkins was speedily on his track, and with a carriage and four reached Sellis’ hotel in the

town, just in time to find the bird he had sprung had retired to its rest. Unwilling to disturb him that night he placed an officer outside, opposite the bedroom window of the fugitive, himself taking his place in the hall. When Walsh came down in the morning, his eye falling upon the 'Little Ferret,' whom he knew perfectly well, he put his hand to his head and exclaimed 'Foolish man, foolish man.' He was conveyed back to London, and being tried and found guilty, was transported; but ultimately returning to England, he was living, not many years ago, in a county bordering on Warwickshire.

“ Adkins used to relate one of his captures with much unction. A murder had been committed in Staffordshire under circumstances of peculiar atrocity. A large reward being offered for the apprehension and conviction of the person guilty of the deed, Adkins put himself in motion, and soon got scent of his prey down 'Whitechapel way.' Finding the person whom he suspected lived with a female in a house in one of the lowest streets in that locality, he dressed himself up as a country labourer, and thus gained admission. It was a long while ere the female would tell anything; at last she stated he had not been there since the murder, but would doubtless come; the signal of his presence being a slight tap on the window-shutter. After a week's patient waiting on the part of the officer, the much-longed-for tap was at last heard.

Adkins touched his breast, as a reminder to his hostess that pistols were there in case she broke faith with him. The man came in, and started at first on seeing a stranger present, but on being assured by the female it was a pal of hers, the two soon became social, and smoked 'the pipe of peace.' Watching his opportunity, Adkins threw himself upon his victim, and (tell it not in Gath) with the assistance of the woman, the handcuffs soon encircled his wrists. The capture made, the prisoner was tried, and being convicted, was hung.

"Another time he was on the look-out on a similar errand Haymarket way. He was aware of a house, at the back of which some of the worst characters of the day used to meet to refresh themselves. The room set apart for these worthies was ventilated by a sort of skylight from above that was thrown open. Adkins gained admission to the top, and looking down from his eyrie could observe the company below. After a weary watching for many nights, his reward came, for he saw his victim enter the room. When he perceived he had become seated, Adkins suddenly dropped himself on the table, and coming down on his feet like a cat, called out, pistol in hand, 'I want Tom Jones; I'll shoot the first man who stirs.' Tom *only* being wanted, the rest remained passive; and he said, using his own words, 'I took him as quiet as a lamb.'

"I had been informed that, during the time he was

governor of the gaol, some alteration had to be made in the drop, it being suggested there should be room for five. On its being put up for examination, Adkins observed it was hardly so large as he intended, at the same time expressing his doubts whether it could conveniently accommodate so many as five. Upon this the worthy carpenter, looking up at the machine and surveying it with a business eye, exclaimed, 'Lor, sir, it's all right, you may take my word for it, five could hang there werry comfortable.'

"He was a very worthy man, a first-rate officer, and held the position of governor of the county gaol for Warwickshire for thirty years and upwards, having during the whole of that lengthened period performed his duties with credit to himself and benefit to the county. He died when nearly eighty years old."

§ *Lord Cochrane.*

In 1814 the town was thrown into excitement by the well known stock-jobbing fraud of De Berenger, in which the gallant Lord Cochrane was unhappily implicated, and which ruined this splendid, daring seaman. Justice was done the unfortunate nobleman some twenty years later, and the universal opinion appears to be that he had been treated with the cruellest injustice. There were many dramatic elements in his case. This De Berenger, an adventurer, whom he had befriended, was the cause of his destruction.



About midnight on the 20th of February, 1814, he presented himself at the Ship Hotel at Dover, calling himself Colonel De Bourg, and aide-de-camp to Lord Cathcart, representing that he was the bearer of intelligence from Paris, to the effect that Buonaparte had been killed by the Cossacks—that the allied armies were in full march for Paris—and that immediate peace was certain! After this announcement he forwarded similar intelligence by letter to the Port-Admiral at Deal, with a view—as was supposed—of its being forwarded to London by telegraph; thus making the Port-Admiral the medium of communication with the Government.

He then posted up to London, dressed as an officer, but when near Lambeth, discharged his chaise, and taking a hackney coach, drove to Lord Cochrane's, where he asked leave to change his clothes. The plot succeeded, and the conspirators sold some hundred thousand pounds' worth of stock on "time bargains," before the trick was discovered. It was unlucky that Lord Cochrane's agent should have disposed of his principal's stock at the same time, though Lord Cochrane explained after that he had given a standing order to sell whenever a rise took place.

There was certainly a desperate combination of circumstances against Lord Cochrane—and which raised the most serious suspicion. He was at that moment on the point of quitting the kingdom on

a cruise. Nor was it easy to explain his acquaintance with a "shady" adventurer such as De Berenger was. Lord Cochrane returned to town from his ship to meet the charges—and swore an affidavit before Mr. Graham at Bow street, in which he explained every step of his proceedings on that momentous day. The chief points in this document were as follows.

"At this time I had joined the *Tonnant* at Chatham, and was preparing to sail for the North American station, but on learning the injurious report above mentioned, I determined to denounce him, in order that if he were really the guilty person, his name should be made public at the earliest possible moment, so that no time might be lost in bringing the matter home to him. I obtained leave of absence from the ship. On my return to town, I found that although the authorities were ignorant of the name of the person who came to my house on the 21st of February, public rumour did not hesitate to impute to me complicity in his transactions, simply from the fact of the suspected person, whoever he might be, having been there. An affidavit was prepared and submitted to an eminent barrister, Mr. Gurney, to whom I disclosed every particular relative to the visit of De Berenger, as well as to my own previous, though very unimportant transactions in the public funds. I was advised by him and my own solicitors to confine myself simply to supplying the authorities with the name of De Berenger

as the person seen in uniform at my house on the 21st ultimo.

“The main facts, as relating to the visit of De Berenger, are these. That early on the morning in question, I had gone to a lamp manufactory in the city, for the purpose of superintending the progress of some lamps patented by me, and ordered for the use of the convoy of which I was about to take charge on their voyage to North America. Whilst thus engaged, my servant came to me with a note, which had been given to him by a military officer, who was waiting at my house to see me. Not being able to make out the name, from the scrawling style in which the note was written, and supposing it to have come from a messenger from my brother, who was then dangerously ill with the army of the Peninsula, and of whose death we were in daily expectation of hearing, I threw down the note, and replied, that I would come as soon as possible; and, having completed my arrangements at the lamp manufactory, arrived at home about two hours afterwards, when, to my surprise, I found De Berenger in place of the expected messenger from my brother.

“A poor but talented man—a prisoner within the rules of the King’s Bench—he had come to me in the hope that I would extricate him from his difficulties by taking him to America. After my renewed refusal, on professional grounds, De Berenger represented that

he could not return to the Rules in his uniform without exciting suspicion of his absence. The room happened at the time to be strewed with clothes, in process of examination, for the purpose of being sent on board the *Tonnant*, those rejected being thrown aside; and at his urgent request I lent, or rather gave him a civilian's hat and coat to enable him to return to his lodgings in ordinary costume. This simple act constituted my offence, and was construed by the court into complicity in his fraudulent conduct! though under ordinary circumstances, and I was aware of no other, it was simply an act of compassionate good-nature.

“A very remarkable circumstance, afterwards proved on the trial, was this—that on De Berenger's arrival in town from Dover, he neither went to the Stock Exchange, nor to his employers, whoever they might be, nor did he take any steps on his arrival in town to *spread the false intelligence which he had originated*. He was proved on his trial to have dismissed his post-chaise at Lambeth—to have taken a hackney-coach—and to have proceeded straight to my house. The inference is plain, that the man was frightened at the nature of the mission he had undertaken, and declined to go through with it.

“Had I been his confederate, it is not within the bounds of credibility that he would have come in the first instance to my house, and waited two hours for my

return home, in place of carrying out the plot he had undertaken, or that I should have been occupied in perfecting my lamp invention for the use of the convoy of which I was in a few days to take charge, instead of being on *the only spot* where any advantage to be derived from the Stock Exchange hoax could be realized, had I been a participator in it. Such advantage must have been immediate, before the truth came out, and to have reaped it, had I been guilty, it was necessary that I should not lose a moment. It is still more improbable, that being aware of the hoax, I should not have speculated largely for the special risk of that day.”

Lord Cochrane, as is well known, was restored to all his honours by King William IV. and her present Majesty. At the same time it is impossible to blame the jury for acting on such a singularly suspicious circumstance as the accused furnishing him with a change of clothes. His account of the transaction, too, is so distorted by his violent prejudices and belief that his political opponents were in conspiracy to ruin him, that he absolutely weakened the force of his case.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He even accuses the prosecution of bribing the witnesses, and Mr. Croker of pretending to have lost a letter which was favourable to his case.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE GREENWICH TRAGEDY.

IN February, 1818, a shocking but highly dramatic tragedy engrossed all the energies of Bow Street—whence was despatched to every quarter of the kingdom, in search of the murderer, no less than twenty officers. A retired tallow-chandler, named Bird, who was past eighty, resided at Greenwich, close to the “Mitre Tavern.” He was known to have made money and lived almost alone, with his housekeeper. On a Sunday morning, the 8th, it was remarked by the Greenwich folk that he was not in his seat as usual, and then several people in church remembered to have observed, as they came along, that the shutters of the old gentleman’s house remained unopened. Thinking these circumstances to be portentous of evil, several of his acquaintance, on quitting church after service, proceeded to Mr. Bird’s house, and accompanied by his brother, endeavoured to gain admission, but to no purpose. They then broke open a door between the

house and Mr. Thomas's, and thus effected an entrance. Proceeding through the passage, they raised up the sash of the kitchen window and broke open the shutters. Mr. Thomas then entered the kitchen through the window, and made his way to the hall. On opening the back door, they beheld the body of Mrs. Simmons, the housekeeper, lying in the passage. He stepped over the body and opened the hall window, when he discovered the corpse of Mr. Bird extended on the floor in the parlour, the door between the hall and the parlour being wide open. Upon examining further, he found a quantity of blood on the hall floor near where Mrs. Simmons was lying. It was a track of blood that had evidently been caused by dragging the body to the spot where it then was. The head was dreadfully cut, and one of the ears was slit or torn in two; some of the rails of the bannisters were broken, apparently as if done in a struggle. Close to the body of Mr. Bird, whose skull had been literally beaten in, was a candle and candlestick and a pair of broken spectacles. There was a little table upset behind the door. The whole house had been ransacked by the murderer, who had carried off much property and left as much behind him.

Mr. Bird, it was well known, was in the habit of supping at nine o'clock and going to bed at ten, when the cloth was removed, from which circumstances and the fact of the knives and table-cloth being found laid out ready for use, and the slippers placed to air near

the fender before the kitchen fire, it was inferred that the murder had been committed about nine o'clock at night, but who the murderer or murderers were no one could form the least conjecture.

Intelligence of the discovery of this fearful deed having been immediately sent to Mr. Bird's son, he hastened to the house, where the agony he evinced on beholding the mangled corpse of his revered parent was so heart-rending as never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it. The following morning a coroner's inquest was held. A brick wall nearly eleven feet high divided the garden of the house from another at the end, called Powis's garden, in which the marks of footsteps were distinctly visible. A tile, newly broken by some person in climbing over the wall, lay on the ground and appeared to have fallen from the roof of the summer-house. Two empty bottles and tobacco pipes were on the table in one of the parlours, and were stained with marks of blood, the murderers having evidently sat down to regale themselves when their dreadful work was over.

All Greenwich was thrown into excitement by this outrage, and the town liberally offered the large reward of 500*l.* for the apprehension of the murderers. The pursuit and detection, it will be seen, was of the most exciting kind.

Several weeks, however, were to go by without result, when, all of a sudden, suspicion began to rest on a man called Hussey, who had lodged opposite. This



fellow, a Greenwich pensioner, not more than one and twenty, had been observed, on the Sunday night when the occurrence took place, prowling about on the opposite side of the street, in front of Mr. Bird's house. In consequence he had, after the inquest, been detained for a short time and interrogated by one of the Greenwich constables; but the account he then gave of himself, and the explanation of his suspicious conduct were so extremely plausible and satisfactory that he was immediately set at liberty. Mrs. Walmsley, the landlady of the "Tiger's Head," stated that he had been her lodger ever since three weeks before the preceding Christmas; that she knew he was in the tap-room at half-past ten on the night of the murder, and that he belonged to a club of Odd Fellows, who met regularly at her house; so, of course, there could be no ground for detaining him on suspicion. But, a few days after the murder, Hussey absconded, and other suspicious circumstances having come to light, all possible means were resorted to for effecting his apprehension. Active and experienced officers were despatched in every direction, and advertisements repeating the offer of reward for the arrest of the murderer were inserted in all the principal newspapers; but no intelligence was received of him till the 3rd of April, when a letter arrived at Bow Street from the agent of a Mr. Field, an attorney at Deddington, containing highly important news.

It seems that about four or five o'clock in the after-

noon of the Sunday when the murder was discovered, Hussey had called upon his brother, at Peckham, with whom he had promised to dine on that day. When he arrived, he apologized for not having been able to come to dinner, stating that he had not been well, and that during the earlier part of the day it had been impossible for any one to get either in or out of Greenwich, in consequence of the crowds of people collected in the town by the discovery of the murder of an old gentleman and his housekeeper, who lived immediately opposite to the "Tiger's Head," where he (Hussey) was then lodging. The next day, he and his brother went together to London, where they parted, and on Hussey's returning to his brother's house at Peckham that night, his clothes were wet and dirty, he having been drinking somewhat too freely and fallen, as he said, into a ditch. That night, he sold to his brother several pieces of silver (apparently parts of a broken buckle), at the price of 5s. an ounce. On the Wednesday following, three days afterwards, Hussey received a legacy of 60*l.*, and immediately made preparations for absconding into the country. He removed his box from the house of a Mr. Litton, a cooper, called upon his sister, Elizabeth Goodwyn, at Peckham, and gained access to a box she had lately received, containing the clothes of her deceased mother. He then went out of town for three weeks, called upon his sister again, and again had access to the box—for what purpose will be seen here-

after. Away he went once more out of town, and wandered about the country, living very freely on the road, and, in fact, having little or no regard to his expenditure. This lasted about a month, when mere accident put a stop to his career, and consigned him to the hands of justice. Arriving one Saturday night at the village of Wolvercot, situate within a short distance of Oxford, he entered a public-house, and asked the landlady if he could have a bed, but she not being able to accommodate him, a butcher, who happened to be present, thinking, from the respectability of Hussey's appearance that he was one of the collegians from Oxford, offered him a night's lodging at his house, and he accordingly slept there. On the following morning he returned to the public-house to breakfast, and, it being Sunday, remained there all that day, in the course of which the landlord observed him take out of his pocket a gold ring, on which was engraved, "To the memory of six children;" a circumstance which, in London, where people have quite enough to do in minding their own affairs, would have passed unnoticed; but the landlords of village public-houses are remarkably prying when any stranger comes in, especially if his appearance is at all respectable; and so Boniface, being exceedingly perplexed about this ring and its possessor, determined, by watching very narrowly his guest's conduct and conversation, to find out, if possible, who he was, and how a gentleman who

appeared to be scarcely more than one-and-twenty could be the owner of a ring inscribed to the memory of six children. Hussey's behaviour during the day was excessively mysterious, and led the landlord to surmise, that instead of having in his house one of the Oxford collegians, he was harbouring some swindler or runaway thief; so in the evening, when Hussey presented him a one-pound note in payment for that day's eating and drinking, he positively refused to take it, shrewdly suspecting that it had been either forged or stolen. In this dilemma, Hussey proposed to leave with his host a pair of ear-rings as security for the bill, saying that he should be passing through the village on his road to Oxford the following Wednesday, when he would call and redeem the property, to which the landlord assented. Hussey gave him the ear-rings accordingly, and departed, leaving Boniface wrought up to such a pitch of restless perplexity, that he immediately went to a neighbour, showed him the ear-rings, and had a long conversation with him as to who and what his mysterious visitor could possibly be. They both agreed, rightly enough, that he was a person of suspicious character, and at last they remembered having recently read in a newspaper an advertisement describing the person of Hussey, and offering a reward for his apprehension. The paper was immediately referred to, and the description given in the advertisement convinced them that the individual who

had excited so much curiosity was no other than the murderer of Mr. Bird.

The landlord having procured a companion, immediately set off in pursuit of Hussey, and slept that night at the house of a Mr. Poulton, a publican, in Deddington, starting off again the next morning at six o'clock, after telling the landlord there the business they were on, and giving him a full description of the dress and personal appearance of the man they were in search of. It so happened that Mr. Poulton, to whom they had told all this, was himself a constable, and feeling highly interested in what he had heard, he immediately went out and read the Oxford paper, where he found the description of Hussey to correspond so exactly with the man his visitors were gone in search of, that he determined himself to join in the pursuit. But he was saved the trouble, for, not long after, he saw Hussey pass the window, and being struck by his likeness to the description given, he went out and followed him. He saw him go into the shop of a Mr. Ryman, a neighbour, and on going there after he had left, was told that he had sold a waistcoat for two shillings. Mr. Poulton now got a neighbour named Churchill to accompany him, and, continuing the pursuit, found that Hussey had stopped at the "King's Arms" inn to procure some refreshment. On his coming out of this house, they followed, and speedily afterwards took him into custody, Mr. Poulton

telling him that he suspected his name was Charles Hussey, and that he was the person mentioned in the advertisement. The prisoner, after some little hesitation, confessed that Mr. Poulton was correct as to his name, and allowed himself to be searched without offering the least resistance. On his person was found a watch, and a pocket-book with a ring in it, subsequently identified as part of the property stolen from the house of Mr. Bird on the night of the murder. But the ring with the inscription was not to be found about him; and on being asked for it, Hussey said he had thrown it away at the "King's Arms" inn, where accordingly it was soon after found wrapped up in a piece of rag. On being questioned by Mr. Poulton, the prisoner denied all knowledge of the murder or robbery, but admitted being in possession of the stolen property. The watch found on him bore the maker's inscription, "Miles Patrick, Greenwich." The duplicate of a ring was also found in Hussey's possession, bearing date only a few days after the murder and robbery.

Information of the prisoner's arrest was immediately sent to London, and on the same day, the 3rd of April, about seven o'clock in the evening, a hackney coach drove up to the door of the police-office, Bow Street, containing Hussey and certain persons who had him in custody.

What had happened in the interval had been this.

The last account that was heard of him in London was on Sunday se'nnight, at the "Lamb" public-house, near Fitzroy Market, where, having drunk some peppermint with a relation, who was understood to be his brother, he took leave of him, and said he was going into the country. Adkins traced him from thence to Basingstoke, and there all direct knowledge of him was lost. The officer went to Burton, in Dorsetshire, where his wife was living with her relations, and had lately been confined in child-bed. She and her family were extremely shocked on learning the crimes with which he was charged; he had not been there, nor had they heard anything of him. Most of the officers had been after him in various directions, where there had been any suspicion of finding him, but they did not succeed. On Thursday morning, however, the acceptable intelligence was brought to the office of his being taken at Deddington, in Oxfordshire, a small town six miles from Banbury, eighteen from Oxford, and twelve from Woodstock. The information was brought to the office by the law agent, in London, to Mr. Field, the attorney of Deddington, who stated that he had received a letter from Mr. Field, informing him that Hussey was taken in that town, and that he would be brought to London by the constable, accompanied by a man who was to assist in keeping Hussey secure, and also by Mr. Field himself. The letter also stated that they should travel in the Woodstock

coach till within the last stage of London, and then should come from thence in a post-chaise, to avoid the bustle and confusion which their arrival in London might otherwise occasion. This communication excited a considerable degree of interest at the office in the course of the day.

After undergoing two examinations, one at Bow Street and the other at Greenwich, he was committed for trial; and at the following Kent assizes, held at Maidstone on the 31st of July, was found guilty of the murder, and ordered for execution on the following morning.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MURDER OF WEARE.

THE story of the murder of Mr. William Weare by Thurtell and his associates, is so extraordinary in its melodramatic incidents, so lurid in its details, that it holds the reader with a sort of fascination, akin to the attraction of some repulsive but absorbing melodrama. The characters are marked and striking, the events fall into a sort of dramatic sequence, and the hideous mystery of the whole lifts it out of the category of the vulgar murders which crowd the "Newgate Calendar." Even the district round Watford seems to this day pervaded with the horror of the tradition; there are the lonely roads, the ponds, the dark copses; in the shops you can purchase the whole story of the murder and trial. Even now there are amateurs who collect the literature of the trial, with illustrations, to make the thing more graphic. Sir Walter Scott used to praise for its unintentional dignity and pathos the flow of the well-known doggerel lines:—

They cut his throat from ear to ear,  
His brains they battered in;  
His name was Mr. William Weare,  
And he lived in Lyon's Inn.

The gig which was to take down the two gentlemen by night to the cosy shooting cottage at Elstree, the ladies who entertained them there, the pond, the sound of the pistol-shot in the lonely country lane, these were all exciting elements. It moreover furnishes a good illustration of the sort of philosophy that is furnished fresh by nearly every striking case. As will be seen later, Mr. Carlyle extracted from it his "gigmanship;" but nearly every case will be found to supply some grim and cynical illustration of the kind. This, as I have before stated, seems to form the ground of that peculiar attraction which criminals and criminal cases so often furnish.

Once more the "Brown Bear" seems to have been the place where the whole business was engendered. There had met, with prize-fighters and others of "the fancy," Messrs. Thurtell, Weare, and Hunt. Thurtell was more respectable than any of the usual class of murderers, being the son of a Mayor of Norwich. He had served in the German Legion, and took part in the storming of St. Sebastian. In 1828, he became a "bombazine manufacturer," but being pressed by his creditors met them with the story that he had collected 400*l.* to settle with them, and had been set upon and robbed of the money by some footpads. To this story no credit was given. He next removed to London, and started in business with his brother, where, by

another suspicious accident, their premises were burnt down.

This Thurtell used to frequent the "Brown Bear" regularly, where there was a room at the back devoted to private play, i.e., to the process of plundering "flats." In this den Thurtell, almost on his introduction, lost a sum of 300*l.* at "blind hookey." Infuriated at being thus pillaged, he was at first inclined to withdraw from the place, but thought it might be wiser to turn his dearly-bought experience to profit, and proposed to recoup himself at the expense of some other "flat." The fraternity at the "Bear" soon found this out, and, discovering that he had still something left to lose, determined "to pluck him to the last feather." They resolved to flatter his opinion of his own cleverness, and with this view introduced to him another frequenter of the "Brown Bear," one Mr. Weare, a genuine sporting character, who was well up in "flash" and "cant," and who was pointed out to Thurtell as a green hand, and well worthy of his talent. The result was that the *soi-disant* "rook" was himself cleared of all he had left. He was now so infuriated at the way in which he had been fleeced that he determined to be revenged on all who had been concerned. The others, seeing this temper, thought it necessary to restore his good humour by *putting him on a cross*, as they called it, and letting him know of a prize-fight, the issue of which had

been arranged beforehand. In this way he won 600*l.* But he still had a grudge to the more successful Weare, who was presumed to be so knowing a personage. This gentleman gambled and betted, and was further supposed to be in the habit of carrying a "private bank," i.e., a deep pocket in an under waistcoat, whence he drew any supplies that he was in need of.

Thurtell had other low friends belonging to this unsavoury class. One was named Probert, who had a cottage down at Elstree, where he kept his family, his ostensible business being that of a spirit dealer. Another was a mere useful agent, or under-trapper, named Hunt, who was a public singer, gifted with a fine, cultivated voice, with which he used to recreate his friends at convivial moments. Thurtell's father was an alderman, who in the very year of the murder, was mayor of his town. Weare lived at No. 2, Lyon's Inn, which has long since been swept away.

On Friday, the 28th of October, 1823, the magistrates were holding their usual meeting at the "Essex Arms," in Watford, when they were informed that a farmer, named Smith, had on the Saturday night, at about eight o'clock, been driving near the high road, and had heard the sound of a pistol-shot coming from a lane close by, with deep groans, which continued for a minute or two and then died away. He stopped his chaise to listen. but was persuaded by his wife that it

was merely some frolic or spree. The sound of a gig in the lane was also heard. There were other ugly rumours in the district. Some labourers who were early at work near the lane that led from Gill Street Hill, met two gentlemen who were searching the hedges, and who told how they had been upset the night before and had lost some articles. After their departure the labourers searched for themselves, and found a pistol covered with blood and hair.

The magistrates immediately despatched two of the local constables to Bow Street to ask that an active officer be sent down. It was reported in the district that some strange men had within the last few days been staying at Mr. Probert's residence on Gill Street Hill, a rural-looking cottage with a garden and pond. Constables were sent there and found the owner on the eve of departure, a van loading before the door. They took him into custody. At two o'clock in the morning arrived from Bow Street that well-known, active, and intelligent officer Ruthven, with whom we are well acquainted, to whom the magistrates gave warrants for the apprehension of Thurtell and his friend Hunt the singer. Ruthven set off for town and returned the following day with the two prisoners. There also arrived Mr. Noel, a solicitor, who said a client of his, named Weare, had disappeared, and was probably the murdered person.

A kind of morbid interest was already aroused in the

tale. It was felt that a terrible mystery was about to be unfolded, of which the pretty solitary cottage, standing apart in the lonely district, with its significant pond, was to be the centre. The story of the strangers with their gig, the "bald-faced horse with the four white legs," which many had noted, these things were being whispered about. That admirable artist, J. D. Harding, employed his pencil in making sketches of the cottage and other places adjoining, which are good specimens of his skill. The magistrates, when they met again, were surprised to find that there was a sort of competition between two of the prisoners, Probert and Hunt, both offering to confess the whole story of what had happened. Hunt was first in order of time, and related the hideous work of the fatal night.

Thurtell was a most extraordinary character. He was only thirty years old, but full of a sort of desperate recklessness. He was often heard to talk of "doing for" various persons who were odious to him. But it is clear that his feeling to Weare was that of simple hatred to a man who had pillaged him, as he fancied—with a longing for revenge. He was, however, at the end of all his resources, and was at the moment in hiding at a low sort of saloon or tavern. He was on cordial terms with Weare, and had invited him to Probert's cottage for a few days' shooting, offering to drive him down himself. On the next day, which was October 24, the unfortunate man, who

seemed to look forward to the party with pleasure, got ready his gun-case, also a backgammon board, with other things, to add to the enjoyment of the party. Thurtell procured a gig and the horse "with the white face and legs," and, taking up his friend, they set off on their fatal night drive to Edgware.

About nine o'clock that night he drove up in the gig to Probert's cottage, along with Probert himself and Hunt, the latter having come in another gig. The ladies—that is, Mrs. Probert and her sister, Miss Noyes—and the children were unprepared for the arrival of the gentlemen, and formal introductions followed. *Some pork chops*, which Hunt had brought specially from town, were then cooked for supper; the murdered Weare then lying in the hedge! Thurtell had bought a pair of second-hand pistols at a pawnbroker's, with which he had done the deed; and he recounted how, to Hunt, whom he had met on the road.

We might imagine that long journey to Edgware—the gig rattling along the high roads and lanes, halting at lonely roadside public-houses. Probert driving his gig, and having set down Hunt, came on Thurtell waiting in that dark and lonely lane. His first question was, "Where was Hunt?" The business had been done without him. Hunt arrived, and, being abused by Thurtell for his failure, said: "Why, you had the tools?" "They were no better than pop-guns," said the other. "I fired at his cheek

and it glanced off." When he fired, Weare jumped out of the gig, begged for mercy, offered to give up his money. But the other pursued him up the lane, and, finding the pistols useless, knocked him down. They then struggled, Thurtell striving to cut his throat with a penknife, and finally the wretch killed his victim by—horror of horrors!—driving the barrel of the pistol into his skull, and then turning it round and round in his brains!

During this time there were persons on the road who had heard the report of the pistol in the dark lane; then voices and groans; but they seemed to grow fainter, and finally died away.

After their pork chops, these wretches had gone out to strip the victim and hide the body. When they returned to the cottage, Thurtell displayed a gold watch, with a curb chain, which he gaily and gallantly declared was "more suited for a lady than a gentleman," and made Mrs. Probert accept it. Hunt then sang some songs (!), and the evening was spent in much cheerfulness. It was then proposed that Miss Noyes, the governess, should give up her room to the gentlemen; but Mr. Thurtell and his friend would not hear of it, and would prefer to sit up. But the lady of the house thought there was something strange, if not mysterious in the whole business, and when they retired for the night, she went to her window to watch. Presently she saw the three men go out to the garden,



dragging with them something like a sack. The sack seemed to be too heavy for them to manage, so the horse was got out of the stable, and it was placed across his back. These proceedings confirmed her horrified suspicions, and when they returned she stole down and listened at the parlour door. They were dividing the money—six pounds to each—this was all the wretched produce of the deed!—burning papers, pocket-book, &c., at which work they remained up very late. Before six the next morning Thurtell and Hunt were again out in the fatal lane, and, unluckily for themselves, were noticed by some passing labourers as they searched the hedges. Thurtell said “it was a bad road, and he had been upset there last night.” But the labourers, thinking to find some property for themselves, began looking under the hedges, and discovered the blood-stained pistol, which Thurtell was no doubt looking for. There was also blood plentifully scattered on the ground and leaves.

The party now took their leave of the cottage, got out the gig, and returned to town. But they felt some uneasiness as to the way they had disposed of the body, and having bought a spade, once more drove down. They had hidden the body in a pond, from which they now drew it, and placing it in the fatal gig, drove away to a yet more distant pond, where it was once more sunk by heavy stones attached to it.

In due course the trio were brought up to Bow

Street, and examined before Sir R. Birnie, the magistrate. Though every search was made for the murdered man, it was not until Hunt led the officers to the pond, that he was found.

In every portion of this case we find something strange and weird-like. After this early investigation, the remains of the unhappy Weare were interred towards midnight, and by torch-light, in Elstree churchyard, where they now rest in a nameless grave, and not far from the grave of Hackman's victim, Miss Ray. The mourners were the coroner's jury, who walked to the grave.

It would be impossible to give an idea of the horror and interest which spread over the whole kingdom at the news of this tragedy. The incidents of the fatal night seemed to take possession of the public mind; the agitated wife, gradually led to suspect; the men going out at midnight; the festivity in the drawing-room; the playing at whist, when Thurtell declared the cards were "cross;" and "the pork chops," which seemed to have a sort of monstrous propriety as the food of murderers. Here was a scene from the events of the night: "I did not go to bed immediately," says the hostess. "I went to the stairs to listen, and leaned over the bannisters. What I heard was all in a whisper. First, I heard one of them say: 'I think that will fit you very well.' There was the noise of rustling papers, and as of papers thrown upon

the fire. I afterwards went up to my own room. I looked from my window, and saw two gentlemen go from the parlour to the stable with a light. They led a horse out of the stable, and opened the gate, and led the horse out. Some time after I heard something in the garden—something dragged, as it seemed, very heavily along the dark walk. I had a view of it when they dragged it out of the dark; it seemed very large and heavy, and like a sack. After this I heard a noise like a heap of stones thrown into a pit." She heard scraps of the talk when they were dividing the booty. "Let us take a five-pound note each." "We must be off at five in the morning," Thurtell was heard to say. "Holding shall be next." It was asked, "Had he any money?" and the other replied, "It is not money I want, but revenge. It is Holding who has ruined my friend here, and destroyed his peace of mind."

Other incidents of that dreadful restless night were described. "There was singing," she said. "Hunt sang two songs. John Thurtell asked him to sing once, and I pressed him to sing the second time." A picture of the sofa on which Hunt slept was in some of the papers.

The party were at the cottage on the Sunday, and one of them seemed to have suggested that the spectacle of cards on the Sunday was not good for the morals of the children. On that day Hunt appeared

dressed up in some of the murdered man's clothes, and his friend asked the ladies pleasantly, if Hunt did not look "quite smart in his finery"? It would be impossible to give an idea of all the strange things that occurred in this case, and which quite lifts it out of the vulgar and revolting type of such events.

The most singular part was the transformation of the chief actor from the moment of his arrest. From being a reckless, desperate ruffian, he became of a sudden calm, decorous, and even dignified; and this attitude was maintained even to the moment of his final exit. His speech at the trial was delivered with much force and eloquence, and characterized by singular ingenuity. He imported into it appeals to religious sentiment, which must have revolted many, but which was supported by a fervour that almost seemed genuine. "I look forward," he said at the close, "with a sweet complacency of mind, arising from a conscience void of guilt. Assisted by the Divine power, I feel supported by the consciousness of having ever acted on humane, just, and honourable principles. I trust there is not a spectator in court who does not believe these emotions to be the genuine inmates of my breast. If there be any, I would address them in the language of the Apostle, 'would to God ye were altogether such as I am, *save these bonds.*' . . . . I stand before you," he continued, "as before my God, overwhelmed with misfortunes, but

unconscious of crime; and while you decide on my future destiny, I earnestly entreat you to remember my last solemn declaration: *I am innocent*, so help me God!"

This extraordinary harangue was delivered with much energy, feeling, and dramatic effect; at these last words he raised his hands to heaven, and then closed them on his breast. At passages, he was deeply affected. In passing sentence, the admirable judge, Park, who tried the case, was also deeply moved. "I understand," he said at the close, "that the clergyman of this jail is a most respectable man. He will show you the way of salvation, he will show you that grace that can be given to a contrite heart. Seek, O! seek it earnestly, I beseech you: knock earnestly at the gate which is never shut to a repentant sinner. Pour yourself out at the feet of your Redeemer in humbleness and truth, and to His grace and mercy I commit you; and while you are seeking for it you shall have my devout and earnest prayers that your supplications may be heard." Sentence of death was then passed on him and Hunt on the Friday—less than forty-eight hours. The behaviour of the condemned was extraordinary for its propriety. It was believed that Hunt would be reprieved and so it proved, and Thurtell wished him good-bye with much warmth, "God bless you," he said, "I hope your life will be spared, and that you will live long, and go abroad,

and be a happy man.<sup>1</sup> Pray remember what Mr. Franklyn (the chaplain) has taught you." On the morning of his execution he was sleeping profoundly, and remarked "I have had some very curious dreams. I have often dreamt since my confinement, and what is very extraordinary I have never dreamt of anything connected with this affair." In the chapel after the sacrament was administered, a curious scene followed. The governor addressed him solemnly and respectfully. "Mr. Thurtell," he said, "I feel it my duty to call your attention to a subject which requires your most serious consideration. We are now alone, with no other eye but that of Almighty God to witness what passes between us. I do not ask you to make any confession, but if you have any declaration to make of your feeling with regard to the sentence under which you are about to suffer, this is the most fit and proper time to make it." After a short pause, he then placed his hands on the governor's shoulder, and with much agitation, made this curious and skilful reply, "I am quite satisfied. I forgive everybody. I die in peace with all mankind. That is all I wish should go forth to the world. I beg you will not ask me any more questions on this subject."

<sup>1</sup> The wretched Hunt in due course was released, but this awful warning and narrow escape was thrown away. Strange to relate, this creature was later tried for stealing a horse, sentenced, and executed!

All connected with the execution was carried out in the same calm and even friendly way, which contrasts with the stern cold severity of our time, on such occasions. The execution did not take place till the comfortable hour of noon, when the convict on the scaffold seized the chaplain's hands and thanked him effusively for his services. To others he said firmly, "God Almighty bless you." After the event, persons came and took away his body—strange to say in a sack, and in a *gig* of the same pattern which he had himself used on the fatal night—to St. Bartholomew's, where it was dissected and anatomized. Thus at the end as at the beginning the mysterious vehicle took its part.

For the public of the day, all the incidents of this strange case had a sort of hideous fascination, which even now, on a perusal of the case, it is difficult to resist. There was the long night drive of twelve miles down to Elstree, which is near Watford, where the district seems even now of a lonely, unbuilt-on kind, Thurtell taking down his victim to the rural-looking cottage which stood alone and solitary on Gill's Hill, in whose garden was a truly significant pond. But through the lurid light which played upon the tragedy, the public eye seemed to settle, as if fascinated, on one object—the mysterious *gig*, in which the victim and his murderer had driven down. Whether it was that

the use of such a vehicle in such a tragedy was without precedent, or that its homely, sociable character added a new horror to the murder, or that there was something piquant or *bizarre* in the idea, there could be no doubt that *the gig*, jogging along its course, appeared all through the tragedy in almost a spectral way. Numbers had seen and noted it, as well as its "bald-faced horse with the white feet," ostlers, innkeepers, farm-labourers. Nay those who had not seen, recalled hearing the sound of its wheels. Drivers of carts and coaches met it, generally on the wrong side, flying by. A patrol heard it approaching at a furious gallop, challenged it in the regular form. But it flew past him with a riotous greeting from the driver, "Good night, patrol!" It was like the night *malle-poste* which lends such an element of romance to the "Courier of Lyons." It was of the kind known as a "yellow Stanhope," and was hired in the yard of the present "Golden Cross," at Charing Cross, to which the horse quaintly described as "having a blaze in his face," was brought back after his midnight ride nearly smothered in dirt and very much distressed, while blood was noticed by the ostler at the bottom of the gig. The "bald-faced horse" also unconsciously took his share in the villainies of the night. The woman who had been watching from her window noticed the figures with a lantern moving in the garden, and presently saw the horse led from his stable. The animal was taken to



the lonely lane and the body thrown across his back. He carried his burden to the garden pond, into which it was flung.

Another of the accused, Probert, also was the owner of a gig, a brown one, with an iron-grey horse, which on the fatal night also made the journey down to Elstree. It was to have met Thurtell on the way but missed him. This particular equipage is memorable, as having supplied a new and expressive word to the language. Mr. Carlyle, in a note to his article on Boswell, quotes, with enjoyment, an answer in a dialogue which occurred, as he believed, during the trial, in reference to this gig. A witness being asked why he described Mr. Probert as a "respectable man," gave the memorable answer, "*because he kept a gig.*" This delighted our sage, whose theory of clothes it exactly fitted, and he proceeded to coin that singular word "gigmanity" or "gigman" and "gigmanship," which we often find used with relish in his writings. It is strange, however, that no sign whatever of the dialogue can be found in the reports of the trial. No one speaks of Probert's position, who was indeed not on trial. In the report, however, furnished by the *Morning Chronicle*, there is a passage to be found, which seems to have been the foundation of the dictum. Describing Mr. Probert's position, it adds, "he always maintained an appearance of respectability and kept a gig," which implies a connection between

respectability and the vehicle. It is hard to part from the dramatic dialogue, and the naive reply of the intelligent witness.

Gill's Hill cottage became a perfect show, and thousands came down to look at it, paying a shilling for admission. There was an auction presently of the furniture, and the auctioneer, to enhance prices, would invite attention to the fact, that the sofa was the "identical" one on which Hunt "lay down" on the night of the murder. It was described as "a green couch with cotton cover, squab, and bolster, and stained with blood." It fetched 3*l.* 10*s.* A particular interest attached to Probert's "brown gig," which fetched 19*l.*

Before the trial came on the managers of the Surrey Theatre announced that "in order to convey a more impressive sense of sad reality, and the more effectively to produce the emotions for which it was intended," they were going to produce a piece called

"THE GAMBLERS,"

which they would "embellish with facsimilies (*sic*) of the scenes now so much the object of general interest, on an extensive scale, *peculiar to the limits of the stage.*" Here too was the succession of the scenery as required by the author, including "correct views taken on the spot," by Messrs. Tomkins, Walker, &c., "who have been expressly engaged for this piece."

"Probert's cottage and garden, Gill's Hill Lane, and

Gap, 'The Bald-faced Stag' on the Edgware Road, where will be introduced

THE IDENTICAL HORSE AND GIG!"

In consequence of this, attraction it was no surprise to learn that "the free list must be suspended during the present week."

Unluckily, not the free list only but the piece itself had to be "suspended," for the friends of the accused, considering the performance an indecent proceeding and likely to prejudice them at the trial, moved for a criminal information against the "enterprising" managers, who thought it advisable to take the piece out of the bills "in the full tide of success," it being suggested to them that "it was likely not only to wound domestic feelings, but to prejudice the public against certain unfortunate individuals." Thus the managers, in defiance of "their own notions of the subject, had resolved to withdraw it until such time as the incidents shall no longer *coincide* with the appalling occurrences of the day."

To make all complete, and let the mysterious power of the gig assert itself to the very end, after Thurtell had been duly "finished" by the hangman, his remains were to be handed over to the surgeons "for the benefit of science," as in the case of Mrs. Gamp's husband. After an interval some persons arrived, and placed the body in a sack, as he had placed Weare's. It was then put into a gig which it was noted

was exactly of the pattern of the original gig, and driven away to Bartholomew's.

Among other odd incidents and accidents of the case were these: Thurtell's father, a respectable citizen of Norwich, was elected mayor about the time of the trial. There was a fellow of Caius College, Cambridge, bearing the same name, who, it was understood, was his brother. Hunt's brother, a popular Garden singer, made his *début* in Dublin, as Captain Macheath, on the day the trial began; and, strange to say, was received in the most cordial and sympathetic fashion, though the relationship was well known.

Amateurs of what is called the "Catnach" literature, know that the grandest *coups* of this enterprising person were made in connection with this case. His broadsheets, containing details of the murder, last dying speech, &c., were sold in thousands. When public interest was fairly exhausted, he sent out other sheets headed "*We-are* alive again!" During the trial Mr. Chitty seems to have anticipated Counsellor Phillips in importing his own personal convictions into the case. In taking a legal objection, he said, "It was his solemn opinion before God!" "Oh! oh!" interrupted Mr. Justice Park, and when he came to give his judgment, added the rebuke, "I must hope that in future counsel will not appeal to the Deity for the sincerity of their opinions, for such an appeal gives a sort of sanction, like an oath, to their opinion."

When Thurtell was ascending the scaffold, he begged the sheriff to let him know the result of "the mill" between Spring and Langham. When he was told that Spring was the victor, "God bless him," he exclaimed, "he is an old friend of mine."

We have quoted the "Catnach" ballad that was sung about the streets, one verse of which used to be repeated with enjoyment by Sir Walter Scott:—

They cut his throat from ear to ear,  
His brains they battered in,  
His name was Mr. William Weare,  
And he lived in Lyon's Inn.

But there are other versicles almost as good, and which are worth preserving:—

Confined he was in Hertford gaol,  
A jury did him try;  
And worthy Mr. Justice Park  
Condemned him for to die.

Now Mr. Andrews he did strive,  
And Mr. Chitty too,  
To save the wicked wretch alive,  
But no, it would not do.

It was said, however, that these lines had not the genuine "Catnach" inspiration, and were the work of Theodore Hook or Mr. John Wilson Croker.

In proof of the extraordinary interest excited by this remarkable case, it may be mentioned, that a reporter of a superior cast, who was writing with Elia and

others for the *London Magazine*, went specially down to Hertford, and furnished a very striking account to his journal. This was a person of tact and observation, and his description goes far beyond the trivial "photographic" details usually furnished in such cases, and which are presumed by their abundance of details to bring the incidents vividly before the reader. In this account a regular drama seems to unfold itself before us.

The extraordinary fantastic and even weird-like character of everything in the case has been remarked. Among other singularities, it was noted that solitary as the spot was, and desperate as was the murder, the actors and witnesses all "fell into clusters." The murderers were in a cluster: the farmer that heard the pistol, had his wife, child, and nurse with him: there were two labourers at work in the lane on the morning after: there was a merry party in the cottage: there were clusters of publicans and ostlers, witnesses of the gang's progress in their blood journey; and the gigs and pistols, even the very knives ran in pairs. It seemed as though the victim, Weare, was to be the only solitary thing of that fatal night. Again, all through the night before the trial, Hertford presented a strange scene of confusion. There was a noise of men sitting up and walking the streets: chaises were clattering in. The innkeepers were up all night. Everywhere, as it was described, a ceaseless buzz was heard,

and endless iteration of the words "Thurtell," "Probert," "Hunt," &c.

There was delay before the prisoners appeared, owing to some hesitation as to removing their irons, which was thought a dangerous step. Hunt appeared dressed in black with a white neckerchief, and the "carefully arranged disorder of his hair" was remarked. He appeared to be a poorish creature, weak and womanly in the expression of his features. "Beside him stood the murderer, complete in frame, face, eye, and daring. The contrast was singularly striking, indeed fatal, by the opinion which it created of Thurtell. He was dressed in a plum-coloured frock-coat, with a drab waistcoat and white breeches. The lower part of his face appeared to hang like a load to the head, and to make it drop like the mastiff's jowl. The upper lip was long and large, his nose was rather small, and his eyes, too, were small and buried deep under his protruding forehead, so indeed as to defy you to detect their colour. The forehead extremely strong, bony, and knotted." Nor was there a farcical element absent. As when the cook, Woodroofe, was asked by the counsel "if the supper was postponed," she answered, "*No, it was pork.*"

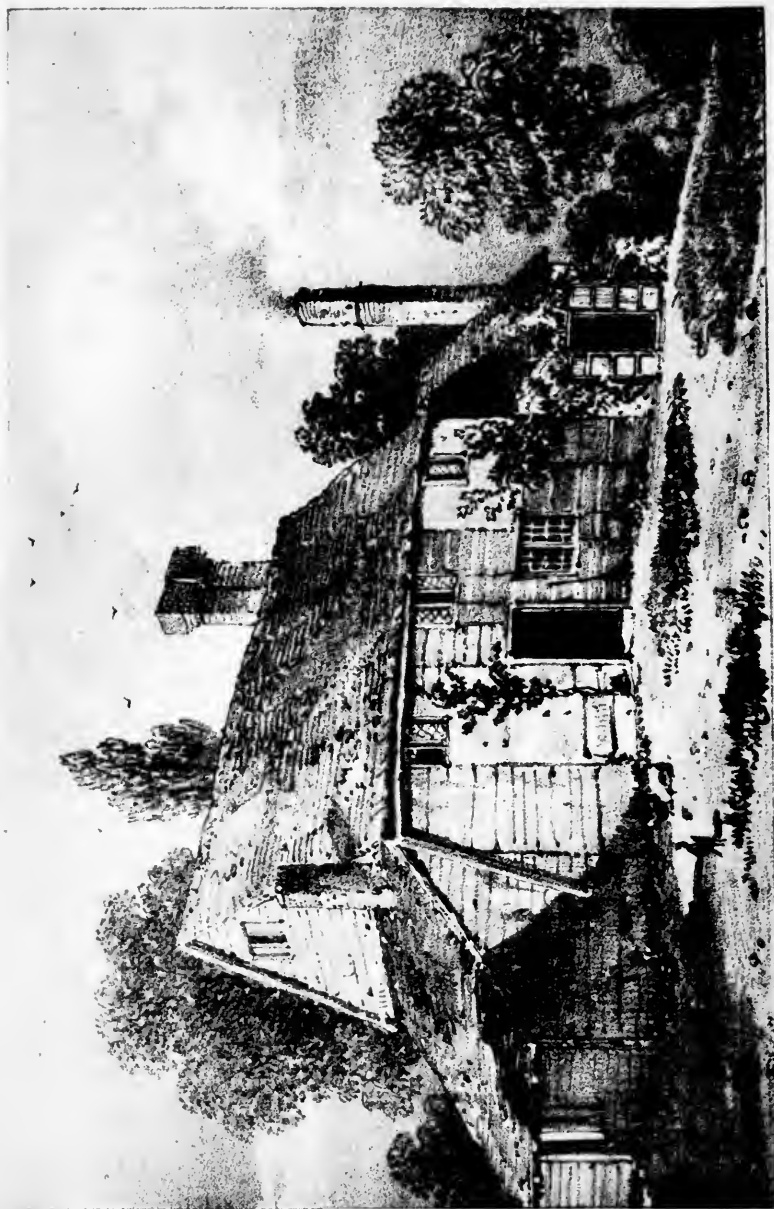
When Probert was called the most intense excitement prevailed. Hunt stood up and was much agitated; Thurtell eyed him sternly and composedly. Probert's face was marked with deceit in every lineament. The

eyes are like those of a vicious horse, and the lips thick and sensual. His forehead recedes villainously in amongst a bush of black grizzly hair, and his ears project out of the like cover. His head and legs are too small for his body, and altogether he is an awkward, dastardly, and wretched-looking animal. He gave his evidence in a brazen style.

The closing incident, when Thurtell made his wonderful display, was truly dramatic. "The slow, solid, and appalling tones," said a listener, "in which he wrung out the last words can never be imagined; he had worked himself up into a great actor. He clung to every separate word as though every syllable had the power to buoy up his sinking life. The final word, God, was thrown up with an almost gigantic energy, and he stood after its utterance, with his arms extended and his face protruded, as if the spell of the sound were yet on him, and as though he dared not move lest he should disturb the echoing appeal. Yet this had all been learnt by heart, and the month before he had rehearsed it to Pierce Egan, being assured that with his gentlemanly dress and manner it would carry him through."

While the miserable Hunt was completely prostrated by the sentence, Thurtell—as the directions for his own dissection were being given by the judge—"actually consumed the pinch of snuff which had, up to that moment, been pausing in his fingers."





GILL'S HILL COTTAGE.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CATO STREET PLOT.

THOSE who are familiar with the social history of the first quarter of the century, must often smile as they read or hear of the forebodings of those who now bewail the increase of radical violence, and the spread of revolutionary opinion. The contrast with the genuine discontent, and insurrectionary fury of those days is extraordinary. Then there were conspiracies of a dangerous kind, fearful plots for risings and massacres, conflicts often between soldiers and armed men, personal insults to the royal family; hootings, and discharges of stones at their carriage, with other significant exhibitions of fury. We are told of loaves of bread being found smeared with blood at the gate of the Regent's Palace, with the legend,

. . . . . *Bread,*  
*Or the Regent's Head!*

The government of Lord Sidmouth became conspicuous for its vigorous mode of dealing with the disorders, and the whole train of spies, informers, &c.,

were in full activity. On their testimony abundant convictions were obtained, and it was not surprising that the government was held in much odium for using such foul agencies. Castles, who figured in the case we are now following, was lashed in these bitter verses of Charles Lamb :—

### THE THREE GRAVES.

Close by the ever-burning brimstone beds,  
 Where Bedloe, Oates, and Judas hide their heads,  
 I saw great Satan, like a sexton stand,  
 With his intolerable spade in hand,  
 Digging three graves. Of coffin-shape they were,  
 For those who coffinless must enter there  
 With unblest rites. The shrouds were of but cloth,  
 Which Clotho weaveth in her blackest wrath ;  
 The dismal tinct oppressed the eye that dwelt  
 Upon it long, like darkness to be felt.  
 The pillows to these baleful beds were toads,  
 Large, living, livid, melancholy toads,  
 Whose softness shocked. Worms of all monstrous size  
 Crawl'd round ; and one, uncoil'd, which never dies.  
 A doleful bell, malleating despair,  
 Was always ringing in the heavy air ;  
 And all about the detestable pit  
 Strange headless ghosts, and quarter'd forms did flit ;  
 Rivers of blood from dripping traitors spilt,  
 By treachery slung from poverty to guilt.  
 I asked the fiend for whom these rites were meant ?  
 " Those graves," quoth he, " when life's brief oil is spent,  
 When the dark night comes and they're sinking bedwards,  
 I mean for Castles, Oliver and Edwards."

Truly an awful denunciation.

This wretch Castles had become concerned with Dr.

Watson, and others, in a conspiracy formed in 1816, of a very bloody kind. It was nothing short of seizing on the government, setting fire to the principal buildings, sabring the soldiers, &c. These men were in earnest and laid their plans in the most elaborate way. Some of the devices seemed of a childish kind—among others, a cohort of a hundred young women was to be sent on in front with the object of attracting or distracting the soldiery. Pikes were manufactured according to a pattern, and designs for a diabolical engine—a low cart, with a number of scythes sticking out from the wheels—and which was to be driven in among the cavalry soldiers—were prepared. Attempts were made at a propaganda among the dock-labourers and others, but without success. This Castles was the chief agent in these manœuvres, and, when all was ripe, communicated with the Government. His attempt, however, to implicate “Orator” Hunt, fatally damaged the case, and all the accused, among whom was Thistlewood, were acquitted.

Thistlewood’s history was an eventful one. His father was a respectable land-steward in Lincolnshire, who obtained a “pair of colours” for him in the army. After serving in the West Indies he threw up his commission and led a wandering life, and as an adventurer found his way to America, and thence to France, where he arrived just after the fall of

Robespierre. He then joined the French army, and became known as a competent officer and good swordsman. But he had also imbibed all the more ferocious principles of the revolution. On the peace he returned to England, where a tide of ill-luck seemed to pursue him, and drive him downwards. His first wife had a fortune of 10,000*l.*, but it proved that she had only a life-interest in the same, and she died within a year. He sold for 10,000*l.* some property which he possessed to a person at Durham, but who became bankrupt before paying over the money. Thus disappointed, and having many grievances against the Government, and becoming addicted to gaming, he gradually sank into abject poverty, and presently began to conspire. His violence, indeed, it seemed that nothing but a violent death could check. He actually sent a challenge to Lord Sidmouth on account of some language spoken of him, for which act he was punished by imprisonment. In 1820 we find him connected with persons of a lower and more ruffianly class, of which the principals were Ings, a butcher, Davidson, a man of colour, and many more. Dismissing any idea so Utopian as a general rising in the metropolis, they devised a more practical but uniquely horrible plan, perhaps the most atrocious scheme that ever disgraced criminal annals in England, from the bloodthirsty spirit in which it was conceived, and from the trucu-

lent, thoroughgoing fashion in which the ruffians set themselves to execute it. They determined to murder all the ministers in one batch, as it were, seizing on an opportunity when they should be assembled together, and went deliberately to work to arrange their plans.

Lord Sidmouth and the other ministers recollected afterwards that on getting out of their carriages when going to dinner-parties, they had often noticed, in the dark, figures watching them—the conspirators thus trying to make themselves familiar with their appearance. Thistlewood succeeded in enrolling over twenty desperadoes—who were ready for any bloody work, and had resolution enough to carry it out in any way.

A short way up the Edgware Road we turn into a mean street, still known by the odd name of Cato Street. It was then a lonely, far-off district, and was appropriately close to Tyburn. In this lonely street was a disused stable, with a loft over it, and the neighbours had lately noticed men arriving with sacks, and ascending to the loft by a steep ladder. One of the spies, Edwards, who had joined the conspirators for the purposes of his trade, regularly conveyed news of their proceedings to ministers. Wednesday night, the 23rd of February, he reported, was fixed upon for the execution of the hideous plan. On that night it had been announced that a “ Cabinet dinner ” was to be

given at Lord Harrowby's house, in Grosvenor Square. One of the gang was to knock at the door, with a parcel just about the moment when the ministers were sitting down to the dinner-table. As soon as the door was opened the others were to rush in, bind or kill the servants, and then burst into the dining-room and massacre the Cabinet. To one man was allotted the special task of cutting off Lords Castlereagh's and Sidmouth's heads, and of bringing them off in a bag brought for the purpose. The ministers determined that the dinner should go on as ordered, though they were not prepared to face the risk of assembling at the house. So cautious were they that even the servants were not let into the secret, but continued their preparations for the banquet. Such was the savage and brutal element conspicuous in all plans of these "friends of liberty," and it was no doubt suggested by the French Revolution.

The courage displayed in dealing with these villains was extraordinary. It was determined to secure them on the evening which they had fixed upon. Mr. Birnie, the magistrate, himself directed the party, which consisted of a strong force of officers, including Ruthven, Wright, and others of known resolution. They were to be supported by a body of foot-guards; but, unluckily, these were not ready at the time, and the police proceeded without them. It was said later that this was owing to some jealousy on the part of the



force, who purposely started earlier. All day long Ruthven and others were watching the stable from a public-house opposite. Notwithstanding, the plan had all but miscarried owing to the attack being delayed till past seven o'clock, the hour fixed for the dinner, when the non-arrival of the guests had already excited the suspicions of the gang.

The moment having arrived, the police surrounded the place. They met a sentry at the foot of the ladder, who was at once secured; and then Ruthven ascended, followed by Ellis, Smithers, and others of the patrol. On bursting open the door they found the whole gang, nearly thirty in number, in the act of hastily arming themselves before setting out, the room being filled with swords, cutlasses and other weapons.

On bursting in, Ruthven called out that he was a police officer, and bade all surrender. Thistlewood was next the door, a sword in his hand, and when Smithers advanced on him ran him through the body. The unfortunate officer fell into the arms of his companion, exclaiming, "O God, I am—;" but died before he could finish the sentence. Ruthven tried to discharge his pistol at Thistlewood, but it missed fire. Westcott, another officer, was hit in the arm by a shot from Thistlewood. Wright was stabbed in the side by another of the gang, while Brookes was shot in the shoulder by Ings, the butcher. The lights had been

put out, so this bloody conflict was carried on in the dark.

The Guards, who had at last arrived at the critical moment, now rushed in, and found the room filled with smoke. Captain FitzClarence,<sup>1</sup> who led the party, had

<sup>1</sup> Many years later, Lord Adolphus FitzClarence, brother of the officer concerned in the Cato Street adventures, was on shore at the Cape. but was unexpectedly summoned back to his ship, the *Pallas* frigate.

After driving some miles, as Lord William Lennox tells us, he came to a turnpike, and the usual payment was demanded. In the hurry of departure the gallant blue-jacket had forgotten to take his purse with him; and upon beginning to explain who he was, he had the gate closed in his face. "I am a Captain in the Navy, and command the *Pallas* frigate."

"That won't do," responded the other. "It's no use; if you haven't got any money, you must return and get it, for without that you can't pass here." So saying, he locked the gate and entered his small hut.

FitzClarence now found himself in what the Americans term "an awful fix."

"Look you, my man," said he, "you will see by this button that I belong to the Navy, and I pledge you my word that the toll and a trifle for yourself shall be sent by me, or given to you on my return."

"We've had so many tricks played," responded the other, "and my orders are so peremptory, that I dare not disobey them."

"Is there anybody near here I could appeal to?" continued the Captain. "If so, just send and say that Captain FitzClarence of the *Pallas* frigate—"

"FitzClarence!" interrupted the man, "are you Captain FitzClarence? I know that name well."

"I am—"

"Jump in—I'll advance the money out of my own pocket, that's not against orders."

Adolphus was completely taken aback, and looked steadfastly at the man, trying to remember if ever he had seen him before.

a narrow escape, as one of the ruffians was about to discharge a pistol at him, when his sergeant, rushing forward, received the shot in his arm. A terrible scene of disorder followed.

Unluckily, the bulk of the party succeeded in escaping, but nine were captured. Arms and ammunition for at least 100 men were found and conveyed to Bow Street.

The following morning the officers discovered the hiding-place of Thistlewood at No. 8, White Street, Moorfields. Lavender headed this party, and first surrounding the house, they broke into an upper room, where he was discovered in bed with his clothes on, and some ball-cartridges in his pocket. Others were speedily captured, and in Ing's room were found 1000 ball-cartridges.

At the trial the prisoners all made inflammatory speeches, Thistlewood appealing to the example of

“Look here,” said the gate-keeper. “I now see a likeness between you and that officer who captured us in Cato Street. He was kind and gentle to us, and treated us very differently from those Bow Street Officers.”

“He is my brother.”

“That's enough, send the money back at your convenience. My offence has been forgiven, and I am now doing all in my power to show my gratitude to the government who appointed me to this post.”

FitzClarence shook the man by the hand, re-entered his vehicle, joined his ship, arranged the business for which he had been summoned, and returned to Cape Town. I need hardly add that the money advanced was returned with interest—in the shape of a handsome present.

Brutus, and inveighing against the informer Edwards. As may be imagined, all were found guilty and sentenced to be executed on the following Monday.

Some visitors who obtained leave to visit the condemned were greatly struck with Thistlewood's calmness. "The governor approached the prisoner, and asked him some question which we did not hear, as, not wishing to obtrude ourselves upon such an awful occasion, and being only desirous of seeing Thistlewood, we remained near the door.

"'Won't the gentlemen come forward?' said the prisoner, in the calmest manner imaginable, and conversed with his visitors in a careless, indifferent fashion."

The scene at the execution was most extraordinary from the behaviour of the criminals. It is said that Thistlewood made that strange, significant remark, "Now I am going to find out this great secret."

The chaplain had offered his ministrations, which were rejected with contempt by Thistlewood. Ings, the butcher, seemed to be in a sort of delirium as they ascended the gallows, shouting, "Come, my old cock! it will soon be over." He sucked an orange, laughed, and sang,—

"O give me death or liberty!"

He then yelled and danced, and sent his remembrance to King George IV., to the disgust of his companions.

Mr. Roberts



Mr. Thurlby

Geo. A. Hunt



The crowd were sympathetic, and voices were heard to cry, "God bless you, Mr. Thistlewood."

After the hanging came a barbarous exhibition. A masked figure came on the scaffold, and proceeded, according to the sentence, to cut off their heads—an operation performed so scientifically that it was assumed he was a surgeon. Such was the episode, painful and shocking in all its details from the beginning to the end.

Mr. Raikes, the diarist and "man about town," who took care to see whatever was worth seeing, long after related to the Duke of Wellington at Walmer, the incidents of the execution which he witnessed. They were of a rather exceptional kind.

"A friend proposed to Alvanley and myself to go with him to the sheriff's room in Newgate. It was the first execution I ever saw, and shall be the last. It was a fine morning, and the crowd in the Old Bailey was perhaps, greater than ever was assembled on such an occasion; all the house-tops were covered with spectators; and when we first looked out of the window of the sheriff's room, there was nothing to be seen but the scaffold, surrounded by an immense ocean of human heads, all gazing upon that one single object. At length the procession issued out from the debtor's door, and the six culprits came on, one after the other, and were successively tied up to the gibbet. Thistlewood came first, looking as pale

as death, but without moving a muscle of his features or attempting to utter a word, except that when the rope had been adjusted round the neck of him who was next him, he said, in a low tone to him, 'We shall soon know the grand secret.' Ings, the butcher, appeared in a great state of excitement, almost as if under the influence of liquor; he gave several huzzas, and shouted out to the crowd, 'Liberty for ever!' twice or thrice, but it was evidently a feint to try to interest the bystanders. The last in this sad rank was a dirty-looking black man, who alone seemed to be impressed with a sense of his awful situation; his lips were in continual motion, and he was evidently occupied in silent prayer. At this moment, one of the gentlemen of the press, who had posted himself in the small enclosure, close to the foot of the scaffold, looked up to Thistlewood with a paper and pencil in his hand, and said, 'Mr. Thistlewood, if you have anything to say, I shall be happy to take it down, and communicate it to the public.' The other made him no answer, but gave him a look. As they were about to be launched into eternity, a well-dressed man on the roof of one of the opposite houses, got up from his seat, and looking at Thistlewood exclaimed in a very loud but agitated voice, 'God bless you! God Almighty bless you!' Thistlewood slowly turned his head to the quarter whence the voice came, without moving his body, and as slowly reverted to



his former position, always with the same fixed, impassible countenance. The caps were then pulled down, the drop fell, and after some struggles they all ceased to live. The law prescribed that their heads should be severed from their bodies, and held up to public view as the heads of traitors. The executioner had neglected to bring any instrument for the purpose, and we in the sheriff's room were horrified at seeing one of the assistants enter, and take from a cupboard a large carving-knife, which was to be used instead of a more regular instrument. When we were able to leave the prison, which was not for some time, on account of the immense crowd, I drove to Seymour Place, and found —— at breakfast, and gave him an account of the scene; when I ended by mentioning the apparent devotion of the black man, he observed, 'He was quite right; you should never give away a chance.' "

The duke listened with much interest to this narrative, said it was very curious, and the observation of the friend a singular trait of character.

Nearly twenty years before Thistlewood's conspiracy, another man, quite as desperate, had contrived a plot for the assassination of the king, which was happily frustrated. This was Colonel Despard, one of those disappointed men, like Bellingham, who had brooded over grievances, fancied or real, until he had worked

himself into an insane frenzy of revenge. The incidents of the case are familiar; but the way in which the plot was discovered is curious. This is told in a letter of Queen Caroline's—which is given in Mr. Harcourt's unpublished collection of letters from the Royal family to his ancestor, Lord Harcourt:—

“20 Nov., 1802.

“ . . . . We have indeed reason, my dearest Lady Harcourt, to thank God for the fresh proof of his goodness in this horrible & abominable Conspiracy being found out. The K. has never named it to anybody; but every body else talks of it. . . . The affair was discovered thus. A man was guilty of Felony; & in searching for that man, they entered a house, where they found Col. D—— & 29 other men. The moment the Bow Street runner appeared, one of the men dropped a *list*; which, thank God, was taken, as well as all their papers. This atrocious deed was to have taken place on next Tuesday, when it is intended my Father should go to the House; & when they had dispatched Him, the intention was to enter the Queen's House, & make *mince meat* of us all. To attack the Tower, arm themselves; & then march to the Bank, open the Prisons, & turn all into anarchy and confusion.”

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE QUEEN'S FUNERAL IN 1821.

ORDERLY as the current of life has always run in London—its people being of sober and decorous habits—the great city has still witnessed some very strange and exciting incidents in its streets. These have varied in their character, and within the last month the engagements between the police and the organized crowds for the possession of Trafalgar Square offered many dramatic episodes. The London mob, however, to exhibit any genuine or characteristic manifestation, must have its sympathies and prejudices thoroughly roused and inflamed. The unhappy story of Queen Caroline—the unworthy object of so much devotion and popularity—was on the whole creditable to the instinct of the crowd who espoused her cause because they considered her to be a helpless woman oppressed by a king, ministers, and the great and powerful. They held by her with much constancy through all her persecution, and when she died, chose the occasion of her funeral for a striking display of their passions and sympathies.

When this event occurred, which was on August 7th, 1821, the king was away, being saluted with the frantic shouts of his Irish subjects. But though her dissolution brought him release from the annoyance and anxieties of many years, it was felt that the obsequies were likely to be the occasion of a display which was certain to lead to disorders and confusion. Her decease took place at Hammersmith, at Brandenburg house, which had been the residence of an eccentric being, who also had passed through many troubles, and whose character was in some points not unlike the Queen's—viz., Lady Craven, the English Margravine of Anspach. Her last moments were associated with much that was pathetic, and it was said that the foreign princess was crushed and broken by the repulse she had met with on the day of the coronation. Mr. Brougham expressed a hope that she felt herself easier and better. She answered, "Oh, no, my dear Mr. Brougham, I know I shall die, and I do not at all regret it." In the course of the evening she said, "I do not know whether I shall suffer bodily pain in dying, but I can assure you I shall quit this world without regret; I have no reason to be attached to life." She added, that in this world, whether in England or abroad, the rancour of her persecutors would always beset her, and it was only in another world she could look for peace and justice. She expressed the deepest regret that she was so little able to reward those faithful servants who had stood by her in her difficul-

ties, but hoped that Government would not let them want. "England," she said, "has certainly been to me a land of sorrow and persecution, but I know how to love those faithful English who have always sympathized with my sorrow, and have done all in their power to defeat the malice of my persecutors." Her enemies had been for years plotting and conspiring to destroy her. "At last," said she, "they *have destroyed me*, but I forgive them. I die in peace with all mankind."

On Sunday, the 6th, she asked that Mr. Busch should come and measure her for her coffin; the servants made excuses; she told them he must make the shell of cedar wood. All through she behaved with astounding firmness and calmness. Observing by her bedside Dr. Holland—afterwards the well-known Sir Henry Holland—who, during her illness, had often expressed a hope of her recovery, she said with a smile and accent of the greatest sweetness, "Well, my dear doctor, what do you think now?" A few hours before her death she observed, "The doctors do not understand my malady; it is here" (laying her hand upon her heart), "but I will be silent; my lips will never make it known."

At half-past eleven o'clock on the 7th, this bulletin was issued:—

"Her Majesty departed this life at twenty-five minutes past ten o'clock.

"M. BAILLIE, H. AINSLIE, W. G. MATON,  
P. WARREN, H. HOLLAND."

By her will the body was directed to be conveyed to Brunswick, and as Harwich was the port at which it was embarked, the Government was conscious that the passage through London offered an opportunity for a display of devotion and attachment which would be disagreeable to his Majesty. In our time the happiest mode of treating such an awkward incident is toleration and sufferance. But ministers determined to "put it down with a strong hand." The most stringent orders were issued that the procession should *not* pass through London, and in spite of the protests of executors and others, the Government took complete control of all the arrangements, ordered soldiers to be in readiness, and even appointed their own undertakers. The Lord Mayor and Corporation, however, made preparations to receive the funeral in the city, and all her friends and followers were determined that she *should* be taken through the city, and it was generally felt or feared that there would be a serious struggle.

August 15th was fixed as the day of the solemnity, and on both sides elaborate preparations were made. At the last moment the ministers announced their decision that the procession, coming from Hammer-smith, should turn off at Kensington, going up Church Street till it reached Tyburn and the New Road, and should then be directed by Islington and Romford, thus avoiding Piccadilly, the Strand, and the city itself.

When this programme became known it was determined the gentlemen who proposed to attend the procession on horseback should meet at Hyde Park Corner at six on Tuesday morning. Persons were to be stationed at every outlet by which it was possible for the remains to be carried ; and, should the procession not pass by Hyde Park Corner, the intelligence was to be communicated with as much speed as possible, all which looked ominous enough. On the other side the Bow Street magistrates were in readiness—the Life Guards and other troops were to attend, and it was determined to force through, if necessary, the arrangement determined upon.

At six o'clock precisely, a squadron of the Oxford Blues, under the command of Captain Bouverie, arrived from their barracks, Regent's Park (which they left at a quarter before five o'clock), at Brandenburg House, and rode up the avenue from the lodge, and formed into a line in front of the house. The helmets of the officers were partially covered with black crape. The gates of Brandenburg House were kept by one of the officers of Bow Street, who admitted only those whose names were on a list.

Mr. Bailey, the Government undertaker, now gave orders for every person to be in readiness to depart, and directed the Lord Chamberlain's officers to deliver up the body to the persons in waiting. The disorderly struggle now began with the following scene :—

First the well-known Dr. Lushington came forward and protested:—

“ Sir George Nayler and Mr. Bailey,” he said ; “ you know what has been the expressed wish of her late Majesty’s executors, and also the disgraceful conduct that has been persisted in by his Majesty’s Government (in such direct opposition to the known will of her late Majesty) in forcing into the funeral procession a great body of soldiers. I enter my solemn protest against the removal of her Majesty’s body, in right of the legal power which is vested in me by her late Majesty, as executor. Proper arrangements for the funeral, and the long journey, and voyage by sea have not been made ; there has not been time for it, and I command that the body be not removed till the arrangements suitable to the rank and dignity of the deceased are made.”

*Mr. Bailey :* I have orders from Government to remove the body, which is now in custody of the Lord Chamberlain ; I must do my duty, the body must be removed.

*Dr. Lushington :* *Touch the body at your peril.* You have no power to act contrary to the will of her Majesty’s executors ; and they do their duty by protesting against such an usurpation.

*Mr. Bailey :* You do not mean to use violence, and prevent by force the removal of the body, I trust, Dr. Lushington ?



*Dr. Lushington*: I shall use no violence myself.

*Mr. Bailey*: Nor recognize it in others?

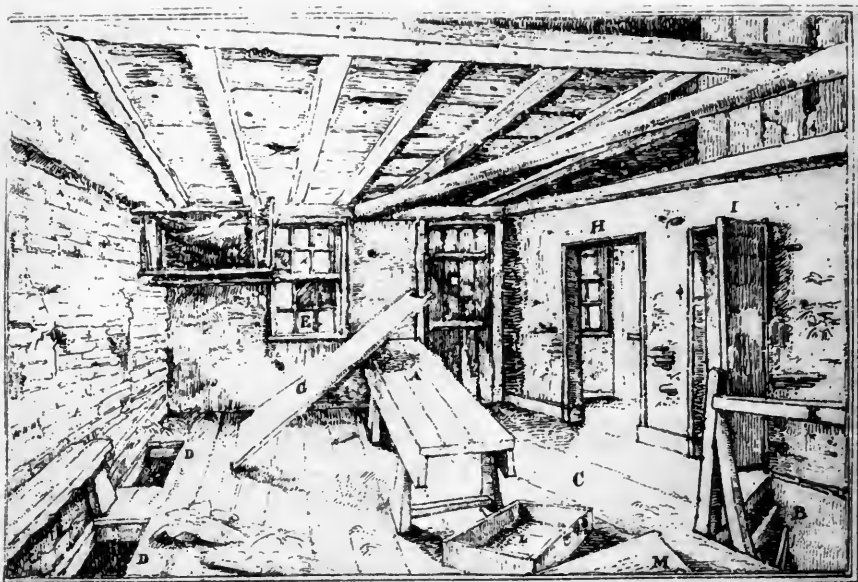
*Dr. Lushington*: I shall neither assist in, nor recommend violence; nor shall I join the procession in my official character of executor, but merely go as a private individual, to show my respect for her Majesty.

*Mr. Bailey*: Very well, sir; I shall discharge my duty firmly, and I trust properly.

At the door Mr. Wilde, afterwards Lord Chancellor, also assailed the undertaker "in warm language,"—protesting against the service. Bailey reasonably complained, "that every impediment was thrown in his way by those who ought to assist him." The other declared that he would not go to the procession in the route mentioned by Mr. Bailey, nor should the body be taken, except by force; and, when the body stopped at the first stage, he would have the body removed according to his own will and that of her late Majesty, without squadrons of soldiers. Mr. Bailey said that his orders were imperative, and that nothing should prevent him doing his duty. He would take upon himself the peril of removing the body.

In which menacing state of things the procession set out. It was a very imposing one, innumerable mourning coaches, soldiers, heralds, &c. All the road from Hammersmith was lined with spectators. But the rain was pouring down. All went well and decently until Kensington was reached, when there

was a halt at the foot of Church Street next the church. Up to this moment the route had been kept a profound secret, and the public generally believed that the diversion from the main road would not take place until Hyde Park Corner was reached, when the procession would be turned into Park Lane. But at Kensington a strong body of constables were seen drawn across the High Road, and were diverting the leading carriages up Church Street. Instantly shouts were raised of "Shame! shame! *Through the city! Through the city!*" As these remonstrances were not attended to, the mob proceeded to enforce its wishes. A scuffle followed which brought the procession to a stand-still. A communication was made to the superior powers lower down in the procession; and while this was taking place, the people assembled in Church Street set to work with an alacrity and success that were truly surprising, to render ineffectual an attempt to pass that way, by blocking up and cutting up the street. Waggon, carts, &c., were brought and placed across the streets; the linch-pins were taken out, and some of the wheels were taken off, and all the horses were removed. Higher up the stones were removed, trenches were dug in the roadway; even the water-pipes were opened. Crow-bars and pokers were at work, and the workmen were cheered with cans of porter, and with the applause of the multitude. A stoppage of as impassable a



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(No. 2.)

### CATO STREET CONSPIRACY.

*INTERIOR VIEW of the HAY-LOFT where Frestlewood & the Conspirators assembled to assassinate His Majesty's Ministers on the night of Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of Feb. 1820.*

- A. Carpenters Bench on which the Candles, Daggers, Guns, Pistols, & Grenades were placed previous to delivery.
- B. Ladder by which the Police Officers ascended, - very narrow -
- C. The exact Spot where Smithers the Police Officer (one of the Patrol) was killed.
- D. D. Two Apertures from the Hay Loft to the Keyrack, thro' which it is supposed many of the Conspirators escaped in the Dark.
- E. Window looking to Cato Street.
- F. Door of the Hay Loft as seen from the Street - firmly closed.
- G. Shutter used for the window.
- H. Entrance to the small room, into which Frestlewood retreated, & where he stabbed Smithers.
- I. A small Room, not used for any particular purpose.
- K. Rail upon which the Conspirators mounted to escape by the back window.
- L. Drawer with marks of blood.
- M. Top of a large Chest.

(Size of the Room 16ft. by 12ft.)



nature was thus created in less than half an hour, as ever was raised by a retreating army to check the pursuit of an enemy.

In this crisis a soldier was forwarded to town with a despatch to Lord Liverpool for orders. As Mr. Bailey, the conductor of the procession, would not take upon himself the responsibility of moving in any other direction than that laid down in the written directions, the whole cavalcade halted until new instructions arrived.

Meanwhile numerous crowds had assembled at Hyde Park, anxiously looking out for the arrival of the procession. They were distracted with uncertainty, for there nothing could be ascertained of the route intended. Cries were raised, "Let our lives be lost before we let her pass this way." A voice exclaimed, "Sir Robert Baker, remember you have not read the Riot Act." A soldier from the roadside of the gate rode up to cut down those hanging on to the gate, when one of the committee-men rode up between them and interposed. The cry was now, "Horsemen! horsemen! stand in the gate." Several persons now got up to the gate, and though the soldiers were not three yards from it, several large stones were thrown at the military, one of which struck a soldier on the breast; and the cry of "murder" still continuing, Sir Robert Baker said, "Open the gate, and we will go on," The gate was opened, Sir Robert Baker came out, and headed the

procession, and it proceeded on towards Hyde Park Corner, the people crying out, "The City! the City! Nothing but the City! Fly to Hyde Park Corner; block up, block up; every man in the breach." The people now began to fly towards Hyde Park Corner, when they reached the gates they were closed, and the military were stationed close to the gates inside the park. The gates were soon opened sufficiently for them to come out one by one; they were then closed again, and the military rode through the crowd to Park Lane, with their horse-pistols in their hands.

When the procession reached Hyde Park Corner, a troop of Life Guards was drawn up; at whose appearance much dissatisfaction was expressed by the people. A thousand voices exclaimed, "Why are the soldiers here?" and the hissings and hootings accompanied and followed them along the road. The soldiery bore those attacks at first with apparent good-humour. The Life Guards, who had before signalized themselves in the same neighbourhood, were not now so gentle, and struck with the flat of their swords some of those persons who reproached them. They attempted to force, *vi et armis*, a passage up Park Lane; but the dense mass of people, and the coaches, carts, and cars, which in a very few minutes were thrown across the road, rendered their efforts wholly abortive. Here there was a delay for a few minutes; until at length the officer of the guard having consulted with some



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(No. 1.)

## VIEW OF CATO STREET.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATE.

- A. Front view of the Stable in Cato Street occupied by the Conspirators on the night of Wednesday, the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 1820, taken from the Blacksmiths Shop opposite, the entrance to which is by the Gateway from John St.
- B. The Stable Door.
- C.C. The Coach house Doors.
- D. The window of the small room into which Hittlewood retreated.
- E.F. The door & window belonging to the Storey loft. — The words "Cato Street" are seen on the adjoining House. The Albion & Groom Public House, where the Inquest on the dead body of Smithers the Police Officer was held on Friday, Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> may be seen on the right hand side of the Gateway, leading from Cato Street to John Street.





persons near him, the procession was ordered to turn, and it entered the park at the corner gate, and proceeded towards Cumberland Gate. The Life Guards were drawn up six on each side of the gate. The appearance of this fresh supply of military force occasioned the most boisterous uproar. Some of the Guards, displeased with the abuse they received, struck the people; but the people, though unharmed, did not refrain from their maledictions. The scene at this moment was most awful—the carnage of Manchester rapidly shot across the memory of the people.

Park Lane, the then contemplated route, had been stopped up almost as effectually as Church Lane at Kensington. The procession was thereby again brought to a complete stand-still, one that was rendered the more painful and alarming, owing to the increased numbers of the populace, as well as of the horse soldiers. Several hundreds of Horse Guards and of Blues lined the streets. At last all this suspense was relieved, and the head of the procession was seen slowly approaching the corner. But as soon as the procession arrived at Hyde Park Gate, by Kensington Barracks, Sir Robert Baker, who was the Bow Street Magistrate, entered it, with the view of heading the procession. The joy ceased, and loud cries were heard of “Shame! shame! she shall not go through the park! let us die first.” Some one crying out, “Every man in the breach,” meaning the single gate that was then

thrown open; the soldiers behaved roughly and threatened “to chop off their hands if they did not let go the gate.” Sir R. Baker knew not what to do; officers of the Guards said they must obey their orders—they were positive—they were peremptory. The most dreadful consequences now were to be apprehended—pistols, as well as swords, were drawn, the Guards displaying the most determined demeanour.

Mr. Hurcombe, the common councilman, at this fearful moment, rode up to Sir R. Baker, “For heaven’s sake! Sir Robert,” he said, “let the procession proceed through the City! You see the people will not be satisfied without such a course be pursued. There is every reason to apprehend that in such case blood will be spilled—lives will be lost. Therefore, reflect well, and let the procession proceed through the City.”

*Sir R. Baker*: I know not what to do; the orders are positive—peremptory: I cannot change them.

*Mr. Hurcombe*: You see that the lives of your fellow-citizens are placed in jeopardy—you see what is the state of the public mind. Should lives be lost, will not you be answerable? Then take on yourself the responsibility.

*Sir R. Baker*: I will.

Mr. Bailey now intimated a desire that the cavalcade should again attempt to pass up Park Lane into Oxford Street; but it was found impracticable. The head of the procession was then moved down the line of

Piccadilly, and had proceeded nearly as far as Lord Coventry's house, when it was met by a fresh reinforcement of horse soldiers, by whom its further progress in that direction was stopped. After some hesitation, the whole made a retrograde movement towards Hyde Park Corner. Upon this the mob gave a loud and deep shout, and mud and missiles flew at the soldiery from all directions. A party of dragoons were immediately sent round to Park Lane, with strict orders to remove the carts; in which service, we regret to say, many of them, as well as the crowd, were badly wounded, the former with stones, the latter with the swords of the soldiery. One dragoon had his eye severely cut with a stone; and he would no doubt have killed the man with his sabre, had it not been for the humane interference of Sir R. Baker. The line of waggons, however, was so very compact, that it was found impossible to remove them, and this circumstance being communicated to the magistrate, whose strict orders were, that it should take no other route than that prescribed by the officers of his Majesty's Government, it was, after considerable stoppage, agreed to open Hyde Park Gate, and orders were given to admit the whole cavalcade, and to exclude the crowd, which was at length effected, after considerable resistance and pelting on the part of the latter.

“ At about twelve o'clock the procession entered the park, and during its passage through it a scene of con-

fusion and outrage ensued of which the annals of this or any other country can, it is hoped, present few parallels. Vast numbers of persons on foot and on horseback passed with great speed along Park Lane, and in all directions towards Cumberland Gate at the end of Oxford Street. Their object was suspected by the Guards to be to reach that gate before them, with a view of meeting the procession and again forcing it to turn back. To prevent this the Guards galloped through the park at full speed, in order to gain Cumberland Gate before them. Simultaneously with this movement of the Guards and the multitude attendant on the royal funeral, the procession itself moved at a very quick pace through the park. Suddenly, however, it halted, and it was understood that the people had closed the gates.

“It now became necessary, in consequence of the peremptory orders issued to the Guards, to force a way for the procession through whatever impediments might present themselves, for them to disperse the multitude at Cumberland Gate, and clear a passage. The people were equally bent on turning the procession, and forcing it into the route of the city. Here a contest arose, and here blood was shed. Some stones and mud were thrown at the military, and a magistrate being present, the soldiers were sanctioned in firing their pistols and carbines at an unarmed crowd. Screams of terror were heard in every direction, and

numbers were seen flying across the park in dismay. The number of shots fired was not less than forty or fifty. This disastrous event, which was the cause of several lives being lost, somewhat sobered the opposition, and the procession was enabled to go its way through Oxford Street.<sup>1</sup> Hyde Park would have been the scene of a tragedy as dreadful as that acted at Manchester, had not the large open space towards Bayswater afforded ample opportunities for escape from the murderous weapons of the soldiery. The Guards were galloping about in all directions. So completely did the soldiery appear at this period to have lost the good temper and forbearance they previously evinced, that they fired several shots in the direction in which the procession was then moving. Some gentlemen who occupied a coach next to that of Alderman Wood, narrowly escaped with their lives. A ball passed through one of the panels of the coach, and came out at the other side, but most providentially without any injury to those within it."

The procession now crossed the end of Oxford Street; and, leaving Tyburn Turnpike on the left, passed down the Edgware Road towards Paddington. Almost immediately upon the cessation of the firing, the latter part of the procession, which during the continuance of the unfortunate affray between the military and the people

<sup>1</sup> The Life Guards were long known by the name of "the Piccadilly butchers," and whenever they appeared were assailed by the mob.

had remained in the park, proceeded rapidly forward, and joined the rest of the funeral train in the Edgeware Road.

The conductors of the procession might now hope that their difficulties were removed and hurried on. But they did not reckon on the indomitable character of the mob with which they were confronted.

It was about half-past one when the head of the procession had advanced to the end of the new Paddington Road, and was about to cross the top of Tottenham Court Road, for the purpose of continuing the route to the City Road. Here, however, a sudden and insurmountable obstacle presented itself: the people, who at Cumberland Gate had been checked in their endeavours to turn the procession out of the by-paths chosen by the Government into the open public street, now made a second and more successful attempt to effect the object of having the Queen carried through the metropolis.

“A common feeling ran from one to another with all the simultaneous rapidity of an electric shock. In an instant every waggon, cart, coach, and vehicle, of whatever description, was seized, or rather spontaneously seemed to go and form itself into parts of a dense deep mass, extending the whole width of the road, and almost a hundred yards in depth. The leader of the procession looked at the impenetrable mass with dismay, and turned down into Tottenham Court Road, making another fruitless effort to deviate into a lone

and by-way ; but the skill and dexterity of the multitude again anticipated and defeated them. Francis Street, Tottenham Court Road, down which the leader of the procession attempted to pass, was in an instant blocked up with carriages of all descriptions, which seemed to rush to a common centre as if by instinct. The procession was thus compelled to move on in a straight line towards St. Giles's, every street which leads out of Tottenham Court Road towards the New Road being rendered inaccessible by the instantaneous blockade of the multitude.

“ At the bottom of Oxford Street those who acted in opposition to the wishes of the people intended to turn the procession back into some of the by-streets, by means of a regiment of foot soldiers ; but the military were too late, either by passive obstruction or by firing. The procession now moved onwards till it reached the top of Drury Lane ; and here the main passage down Holborn being completely blocked up, it was compelled to take the direction towards the Strand. Nay, so anxious and so determined were the people not to be defeated, that it having occurred to them that another attempt might be made to regain the irregular path, by turning out of Drury Lane into Great Queen Street, and thus returning to Holborn, they effectually blocked up the avenue of Queen Street, and forced the procession to descend into the Strand. It may here be proper to remark, that the Oxford Blues, who were on

duty at the time the Life Guards fired on the people, did not participate in the outrage. They were, of course, during the whole day, favourites of the people, and were repeatedly cheered.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This popularity of the Blues seems to have been a good deal owing to the moderation and good temper of the officers, notably of Lord William Lennox, who gives an account of this scene :—

“One of the most unpleasant duties that I ever was called upon to undertake, was the command of a troop or squadron of my regiment during the riots which took place in London, from the time Queen Caroline first landed in England, up to the day of her funeral. It constantly happened that we were called out to clear some street in which thousands of mischievous persons had assembled, and although we knew that among the mob were men of desperate characters, bent upon stabbing or laming the troop horses, cutting our reins, and trampling down any dismounted man, we were also aware that innocent men, women, and children, from idle curiosity, formed part of the throng, all of whom would suffer if an order to fire upon or charge the mob was given.

“So hateful were the military forces, especially the Life Guards, who went by the name of the ‘Piccadilly Butchers,’ that pamphlets were printed and circulated, suggesting that iron balls with sharpened spikes should be scattered about the streets so as to maim the horses, and that every man should carry a knife so as to stab, or at all events cut the reins and thus render them unmanageable. To prevent the latter cowardly practice being carried into execution, the officers had a chain rein covered with leather. While the Life Guards were denounced by the mob, pelted, and insulted on every occasion, the Blues were made much of, and attempts were made to get them to fraternize with the lawless rabble.

“At that period a squadron was always kept in the barracks ready to turn out at a moment’s notice, and one day, when at dinner in the Regent’s Park, I was ordered at once to proceed to Charlotte Street, Portland Place, to disperse a mob assembled there, who were breaking



When the cavalcade arrived at the bottom of Newcastle Street, a body of infantry was drawn in a semi-circular line across the street from the New Church to prevent the people from passing. Upon reaching Temple Bar, the procession halted for a short time; and part of the body of Life Guards which had hitherto accompanied the cavalcade, here separated from it and returned to the west-end of the town.

Thus after this persevering struggle the crowd had their way. The shade of the "murdered queen" must

windows and extinguishing the lamps. A magistrate was in attendance to read the Riot Act, and the affair began to get so serious, stones and brick-bats being hurled at my men, that it was found necessary to put a stop to it.

" 'I shall read the Riot Act,' said the timid magistrate; 'all I hope is, when you proceed to clear the street, should resistance be made, that you will order your men to fire over the heads of the mob, and pray be very careful not to have them trampled upon.'

" 'I hope,' I replied, getting rather impatient at the treatment my men were receiving, 'that I shall do my duty in as humane a manner as possible, but if we are to be kept much longer a passive mark for the mob to attack, I can hardly answer for my men keeping their temper.'

"The Riot Act was read, and again was I appealed to by the really kind-hearted but mistaken magistrate.

" 'Pray be careful,' said he.

" 'Your duty is over,' I replied, amidst a volley of stones, 'and mine begins.' So giving the word 'draw swords,' I hastily exclaimed, 'Spare all men not mischievously engaged, and above all women and children; but cut down any one attempting to unhorse you, or stab your horse, or caught in the act of throwing a missile.'

"Following this exhortation by an order to trot, the mob scampered away, and in less time than I can narrate it the street was cleared."

have been gratified at the triumph. The ovation was tremendous. The Lord Mayor and Corporation were taken by surprise and rushed to meet it, and the immense procession was taken through the very heart of the city.

Among the friends and sympathizers in the procession, was found a distinguished man, Sir Robert Willson and his son. Such was the frantic partisanship of the time, that this gentleman, who was a distinguished officer, took part with a crowd who were engaged in conflict with his Majesty's regiments—or, at least, did not dissociate himself from it. This scandal—and it is rare that we find political partisanship so overpower *esprit de corps*—could not be passed over, and without loss of time the offending officer was summarily dismissed from the army, not to be restored until many years had elapsed. The magistrate also, Sir R. Baker, who had shown, as it was thought, such weakness, was compelled to retire.

After this inauspicious start the luckless cortège posted on its way, travelling through the night till it reached Chelmsford. After only two or three hours' delay the party started, once more, but halted for a night at Colchester. A few faithful friends and servants attended the remains through all the inconveniences of the route.

The executors now thought that a fitting opportunity had arrived for carrying out the instructions of

their deceased royal mistress, and during the night had a plate affixed to the coffin with this inscription :—

HERE LIES  
CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK,  
THE INJURED QUEEN  
OF ENGLAND.

But the persons in charge of the funeral promptly interposed, and, in spite of the most vehement remonstrances of the executors, summarily removed the plate. There had nearly been the scandal of a scuffle between the contending parties over the body in a church.

On the Thursday Harwich was reached, and on the Monday following the remains were landed at Stade. Not till the following Friday did the weary pilgrimage cease, when Brunswick was at last entered, and the remains of the unhappy lady were left to rest.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE RESURRECTION MEN.

ABOUT the beginning of the present century the sudden revelation of the lawless and revolting proceedings of those familiars of the surgeons known as "Resurrectionists" startled the kingdom, and the later villainies of Burke and Hare, which added murder to the original crime, followed. Few are aware that at this time this was a regularly organized system, with highly-paid gangs, headed by *entrepreneurs* more or less skilled and daring, and who made their calling a regular profession. Much obloquy naturally attached to these spoilers of the graveyard; but just as it has become the fashion to "whitewash"—as it is called—certain notorious historical characters, reversing established judgments, so it is actually possible to do some justice by these professors, and prove that the real delinquents were the persons who fostered, employed, paid, and urged them on to their odious task.

One of the most amiable and accomplished men of

his profession was the late Sir Astley Cooper, and his life, written by his son, shows us the steady, laborious course of a high-minded man, working his way to eminence through all sorts of difficulties. No one was so just, kind, and forbearing, or so tolerant of others; and none could have made his way by means more legitimate. He rose strictly by force of character and talent. It is pleasant to read of his touching affection as a son, and of his happy domestic virtues. He had a jealous instinct for the honour of his profession and of all that concerned it, and a passionate devotion to its advancement. It was, however, this zeal or passion that led him into partnership with the scum who ministered to the scientific necessities of the profession, and which, but for the lax administration of the police at the time, would have been brought within the grasp of the law.

Mr. Cooper lived in St. Mary Axe, having succeeded to the residence of the famous surgeon Cline. At the back portion of his house he fitted up a dissecting-room, and hither, as we learn with some astonishment, came all the leading Resurrectionists with their booty, obtained, we are assured, with the full knowledge of this eminent man, in the most unlawful way.

“Mr. Cooper,” says his nephew, “was altogether unconscious that, as the enactments relating to dissection at that time stood, he was not only benefitting by an infringement of the laws on the part of the body-

snatcher, but was himself, as the receiver after the disinterment, actually liable to be tried for misdemeanour, with a risk of incurring severe penalties. He therefore made no secret of the nature of his occupations in this apartment; contenting himself merely by painting the windows so that persons outside might not observe him while engaged in his investigations, a moderate degree of circumspection being used by the Resurrectionists who brought the subjects to him, with a proper caution being exerted on his own part, to prevent any offence to public feeling.

“On one occasion, however, the presence of mind and activity of Mr. Cooper alone prevented, in all probability, a disturbance ensuing. In the winter session of the year 1801, in consequence of certain disagreements between the hospital porters and the Resurrectionists, who were in the habit of supplying the Anatomical School, the latter were prevented taking the subjects into the dissecting-room. They therefore adopted the plan, of course with Mr. Cooper’s sanction, of depositing them at night in the courtyard before his house in St. Mary Axe, from whence they were removed to the hospital in a coach, under the superintendence of a man of the name of Butler, who at that time had the dissecting-rooms at St. Thomas’s under his care.

“One night, a Resurrectionist of the name of Harnett

had deposited three hampers within the gates of Mr. Cooper's house, and Butler, having received information of the fact, as usual, came with a coach to remove them. The hampers being safely packed in the vehicle, Butler got inside with them, and ordered the man to drive to St. Thomas's Hospital. All went on very well till they got into Gracechurch Street, opposite to an inn called 'The Coach and Gate,' when the coach suddenly stopped. Butler, at once suspecting discovery, without showing himself, listened; and heard the coachman calling out to some one that 'he had got a load inside, that he didn't much like the looks of, and he didn't know whether he wasn't getting himself into trouble.' This was enough for Butler, who, opening one of the doors, slipped out unseen by either of the parties, and, leaving his charge in the coach, ran back to St. Mary Axe to give an account of what had occurred."

At midnight Mr. Cooper was roused up by the hackney coachman who had brought his freight, and was attended by the watchman, who insisted on inquiring into the business. He was with difficulty got rid of, but announced his intention of laying the whole matter before the Lord Mayor in the morning. It shows how comfortably embarrassments of this sort could be disposed of, when we learn that the surgeon himself was with the Lord Mayor betimes "while at breakfast," and at once related to him, as his nephew

naïvely tells us, “the facts of the whole transaction; and the conversation which ensued ended by an assurance from his lordship that Mr. Cooper should not be molested any further. Curiously enough, on descending the steps of the Mansion House, my uncle met the watchman about to give in his report of the occurrence. The constable, having seen him only when in bed, did not recognize him; Mr. Cooper, however, remembered him at once, but passed on without notice.”

The defence made by the surgeons was that it was impossible to obtain “subjects” in any other way: the patients in hospitals, naturally objecting, in Dickens’s humorous phrase, “to have their remains disposed of for the benefit of science.” Thus physics, anatomy, and surgery would be compelled to stand still. The schools were crowded with pupils, and there was then a sort of eagerness for entering the profession; but it was impossible to teach without “demonstrations.” An eminent professor at the Theatre of Anatomy, Blenheim Street, so late as 1823, assailed this sad state of things, in a letter to his friend Cooper. There is an amusing disregard of all other considerations, save the important one of their common science:—

“MY DEAR SIR ASTLEY,—In answer to your application, relative to the best means of procuring subjects for the anatomical schools, I beg leave to notice that, from *the very disorganized state of the system at pre-*



sent pursued by the resurrection-men, little is to be expected from their services. To enumerate some of their practices:—First. A most infamous plan has lately been practised by several resurrection-men, of breaking open the doors of out-houses and dead-houses, where the bodies of suicides are deposited, previous to a coroner's inquest being held, and thus committing a felony to procure them. Secondly. They are in the habit of destroying the tombs, vaults, and expensive coffins of the more wealthy part of the community, to obtain their prey. Thirdly. Violent quarrels almost always ensue, when two opposing parties meet in a cemetery, which, by rendering all liable to detection, tends much to increase the alarm that the public experience from their depredations; and, lastly, from the number of searches by warrants, &c., that almost daily take place in our premises (for, to speak individually, I have had several subjects seized by police officers, three within the last month, for which I had paid large sums), it is to be presumed, that after receiving the money from an anatomist for a body, an information is subsequently laid against him by one of the party; whilst another, pretending to be a relative, claims the subject, or re-stealing it, afterwards sells the same again at a different anatomical theatre.

“The exactions, villainy, and insolence of many of the long-established resurrection-men are such, that

I have for some time past ceased to employ them ; in consequence, my school has a very precarious and scanty supply ; and that only from strangers and novices not able to cope with those desperadoes, *who have had an entrée*, by means of grave-diggers, into the various burial-grounds in and near the metropolis, for a very considerable period.

“ Here allow me to call to your recollection the following fact, of Mr. Smith, one of your pupils, who subsequently attended a summer course of my lectures. This gentleman being engaged alone in dissecting in the Borough, a resurrection-man entered the apartment, and immediately proceeded to cut up the subject with which he was then occupied, threatening at the same time to assassinate Mr. S. should he offer the least resistance. *I might further remark that I almost owe my existence to the proximity of a police-office ; for on more than one occasion, in consequence of commotions raised by these ruffians, my whole premises would have been laid waste, were it not for the prompt and friendly interference of the magistrates in the vicinity, particularly of Sir Robert Baker.*”

The way, indeed, in which these professors were often “ done,” as it is called, is illustrated by a trick played on the same professor. One night he was knocked up by a man, who informed him he had got a subject for him. Mr. Brookes himself rose to receive

it, according to his custom, and desired the man to bring it in, paid him a portion of the money, for which he was particularly anxious, and desired him to call the next day for the remainder. He then with a kick rolled the parcel down six or seven steps which led to his dissecting-room, and turned away. As he was ascending the stairs to his bedroom, Mr. Brookes was surprised to hear what seemed to him to be complaints issuing from the package, which he had just so unceremoniously dismissed into the passage leading to the dissecting-room, and found that a live man had been placed in the sack. The man, alarmed, at once, in a tone of supplication, begged him to let him go, saying he had been put into the sack when he was drunk, and that it was a trick which had been played upon him. Mr. Brookes, who did not believe a word of the fellow's story, but felt convinced that it was a preconcerted scheme of the Resurrectionist to rob him of as much money as he could get from him, opened the door, and at once kicked the subject into the street.

There were a few "leading" men in the business, with whom the surgeons were in communication, and the art, ingenuity, and courage displayed by these fellows might have raised them, in a more respectable profession. An Irishman named Murphy, with Crouch, and a couple more, "worked" for Mr. Cooper. But they had to be remunerated on a very costly scale. At the beginning of "the season" they would come to

make their arrangements with the schools, and as they had a sort of monopoly, they could almost fix their own terms. At the commencement of a new session at the hospitals, Crouch or Murphy would be seen flitting about the dissecting-room, bowing complacently to the lecturers, and either by a proffered smile inviting confidence, or perhaps merely by silence leading the anatomical teacher to believe that his school was to be the chosen scene of his traffic during the coming winter. Each of these parties was shy in commencing conversation. Some such kind of dialogue as the following usually occurred :—“ Well, Mr. —, what does Sir — mean to stand this season ? ” “ Oh ! I don’t know, Murphy—whatever’s fair. What will you take this morning ? ” “ Nothing, I thank you, Mr. —, but I don’t mean to work this season without I get ten guineas a subject.” “ Oh, indeed ! well, we don’t mean to give more than eight.” “ Then you may go and tell Sir —,” would be the rejoinder, “ that he may raise his own subjects ; for not one will he get from us ; ”—and the negotiations would be broken off for the present. In the interim, perhaps, some new men would be employed, but it generally happened that their efforts were crushed in the commencement, they being either detected by police through means of information from the old Resurrectionists, bribed off, or in some other manner hindered from the prosecution of their endeavours. This

having failed, Murphy would come back again, and say, "Come, you can't get on without us—give us fifty pounds down, and nine guineas a body, and we will work for your school, and no other." This arrangement was often acceded to. As was to be expected, these rascals, though promising an exclusive supply, entered into contracts with as many schools as would entertain their proposals. This shows how sordid was the motive that induced the professors to make these agreements, viz. to secure as large a number of paying pupils as possible.

Sometimes these surgeons, objecting to be victimized in this fashion, determined to deal directly with the sextons and other persons employed by relatives to watch the graves; and the Resurrectionists, with much cunning, would offer to assist them in their immoral attempts at corruption. The unsuspecting surgeon would be brought to the house of the sexton under circumstances of guilty secrecy, when some such scene as this would follow. At length, with the utmost hesitation and diffidence, Murphy, at the request of his companion, would break the ice, and then gradually explain the object of their visit. The grave-digger listened seemingly with the most profound consideration. At last, he sternly though quietly said: "And this is really what you have come to me about?" Mr. S—— assented. "You are sure of it?" he continued, in the same measured tone of cool surprise, while at

the same time, stooping down, he deliberately drew from under the bed a huge horse-pistol, the muzzle of which he caused to stare directly in Mr. S——'s face. Mr. S. instinctively drew back ; but before he could make any remark, was assailed with a volley of oaths and abuse, so fearfully violent, and such threatenings of vengeance if he dared to approach the ground under his care,—the pistol all the time, which the fellow swore was loaded, shaking in his hand, exactly opposite to the trembling visitor's head,—that perhaps Mr. S—— had never before experienced a degree of relief from terror and alarm to be compared with that which he felt when he again found himself with Murphy among the crowd of people on Holborn Hill.

The following morning, Murphy was again at the hospital. The surgeon said he was certain such extreme violence must be peculiar to that individual, and asked him if he knew of no other man more likely to suit their purpose. Murphy was prepared, and mentioned another of his allies, the superintendent of a chapel in St. George's in the East.

Mr. S—— was soon joined by a demure, respectable looking person, and Murphy having introduced them to each other, fell back behind. They had not been many minutes together, when a repetition of the scene of the preceding evening occurred, modified only by the different positions of the parties. Murphy, sidling up to the doctor, as if in a state of alarm, hurried him

away : followed, however, for some distance by the sexton, expressing the greatest anxiety to meet with a watchman, and regretting only that he had not got the "rascals safe in his own premises."

It may be imagined that the history of these men exhibited a curious record of low adventure. As we have stated, Murphy, before alluded to, Crouch, Butler, Harnett, Hollis, and Vaughan were the leading spirits. These, indeed, were the only *regular* Resurrectionists ; the others of the body being composed of Spitalfields weavers, or thieves, who found the disguise of this occupation convenient for carrying on their own peculiar avocations.

Butler is described as a short, stout, good-tempered man, with a laughing eye, and Sancho Panza sort of expression. He was much addicted to gin. When drunk, he was a great boaster, and inclined to be violent ; but was easily cooled down by goodhumoured treatment.

He was originally a porter in the dissecting-room at St. Thomas's ; afterwards followed his father's business of an articulator, and dealer in bones ; and subsequently dealt much in teeth. He went to Liverpool, and under an assumed name practised for some time with considerable prosperity as a dentist. His dissolute habits, however, soon prevailed, and prevented the continued success of a business which might otherwise have secured his independence. He

became involved in debt, and was obliged to fly from his creditors. Some years previous to this period, the Edinburgh mail had been stopped and robbed by persons, none of whom, I believe, were at the time apprehended. Butler had not left Liverpool very long, after his failure in that city, before he was taken up, for trying to pass a five-pound note, the number of which, by proving it to be one of those stolen on that occasion, and a train of other circumstances, led to the detection of his connection with the robbery of the mail. He was tried, and received sentence of death.

From some circumstance, his execution was delayed considerably beyond the usual period, and Butler, who had accumulated a great quantity of information on various matters, and was in other respects an entertaining companion, contrived to attract the favourable attention of the governor of the gaol. Having complained to him of the want of occupation his position entailed upon him, the governor, who had learned that he had been in business as an articulator, procured for him the carcase of a horse. The bones of this animal were prepared in the usual way, and Butler, to whose cell they were afterwards removed, proceeded to articulate them so as to form the skeleton.

The Austrian Archdukes, John and Lewis, were at the time in this kingdom, and, among other places,



paid a visit to Edinburgh; and on visiting the gaol, found Butler at work in his cell, articulating the bones of this horse. Their Imperial Highnesses were much struck by the circumstance, and having learned from the governor that he was under sentence of death in consequence of robbing the mail coach, interested themselves in his favour, and sued to the Prince Regent for his pardon. This was, after much difficulty, granted, on condition that he left the country immediately, and did not attempt on any account to return. He accordingly took his departure, and was never heard of again.

Crouch, or Ben Crouch, as he was called, was the son of a carpenter who worked at Guy's Hospital. He was a tall, powerful, athletic man, with coarse features, marked with the small-pox; and was well-known as a prize-fighter. He used to dress in very good clothes, and wore a profusion of large gold rings, and a heap of seals dangling from his fob.

He was always rude and offensive in his manners, exceedingly artful, very rarely drunk, but, when so, most abusive and domineering. In his prosperous days, he was the councillor, director, comptroller, and treasurer of the whole party, and in dividing the spoils, took especial care to cheat every one. He continued actively engaged in the business till about 1817, when he gradually withdrew from it, and occupied himself principally in obtaining and disposing of teeth.

He went abroad several times, and followed this occupation both in the Peninsula and France, in conjunction with another Resurrectionist, with whom he was always on the most intimate terms, of the name of Jack Harnett.

Upon these occasions, they used to obtain licences as suttlers, in order that they might be considered legitimate camp-followers. In addition to their object of procuring teeth, they had other designs of even a more revolting nature. This was to follow closely the troops into the field of action, and to rob the killed as soon as prudence would allow them to employ themselves in their diabolical transactions. The epaulettes from the shoulders of the officers, and the bullion from their regimentals, offered a considerable source of gain on these occasions, and I have been informed by those who were made acquainted by the very men with the facts, that they not unfrequently found trinkets of value, and even considerable sums of money in the pockets of the slain.

They generally obtained the teeth on the night succeeding the battle, only drawing them from those soldiers whose youth and health rendered them peculiarly fitted for the purposes for which they were to be employed.

“At one time during their Peninsular expedition, these companions became separated by accident, and entirely lost sight of one another for three weeks;

each considering that the other had fallen a victim to his occupation. The circumstances under which they again met are worthy of relation. Crouch heard of a château which had been deserted, and immediately made up his mind to plunder it of its valuables. No sooner was it dark than he entered the deserted house. While groping his way he suddenly stopped to listen to what he believed to be an approaching footstep. The deadly silence was only interrupted by the suppressed breathing of the two guilty depredators ; but, remarkable as the fact may appear, this was sound enough to inform one of them who was his companion, for Crouch recognized the peculiar breathing of his lost friend Harnett, and in total darkness challenged him by name. The recognition was mutual, a light was quickly struck, they related briefly their adventures since their separation, regaled themselves upon the ample supplies the house afforded, packed up portable valuables for which they afterwards obtained 400*l.*, and on the following morning left the pillaged mansion to prosecute their usual occupation.

“ From the produce of these adventures, Crouch was enabled to build a large hotel at Margate, and this speculation at first seemed likely to answer his expectations. By some chance, however, the nature of his previous occupation in life was discovered, and such was the effect of this disclosure, that his house was avoided, and he was obliged to part with it, at a very

heavy loss. During the time he kept this establishment, he paid occasional visits to the continent to collect teeth, in company with his friend Harnett. However, from the number of Jews and others who gradually entered into this traffic, the profits were much diminished, and Crouch became very poor, and on one occasion, being in emergency, he surreptitiously obtained possession of property belonging to Harnett, who was at that time in France, and applied it to his own purposes. Harnett immediately came over to England, followed Crouch, who had gone into Scotland, and having found him gave him into custody. He was tried and sentenced to imprisonment for a twelvemonth. He afterwards came to London, where he lived awhile in great poverty, and was one morning found dead in the tap-room of a public-house near Tower Hill."

Jack Harnett, above alluded to, was a rather stout, red-haired, ill-looking fellow ; uncouth in his address and manner of speaking, fond of watch garniture, and always the firm and steady friend of Crouch, until the incident just related. Those two always held together whenever disputes occurred in the party. In the latter part of his career he accumulated a considerable sum of money in the manner already described, and not being a speculator like his companion, died comparatively rich, leaving nearly 6000*l.* to his family.

A characteristic touch was associated with the end of this desperado. When he was dying of consumption in one of the hospitals, he sent for one of his old employers, and with the greatest anxiety solemnly extorted from him a promise that his body was to be spared the indignity of dissection!

Harnett, on his return from Spain, had placed the proceeds of the tour in a large chest which he valued at 700*l.*, and with which he landed at the Tower. This precious cargo he forgot in a hackney coach, through the carelessness of his daughter, and the coachman, thinking that he had a prize of value, was not a little disappointed when he found out the nature of what he had stolen, but he succeeded in disposing of a good deal of the booty to the dentists of the metropolis.

Murphy was known as "the King of the Resurrectionists," but the whole class, as may be imagined, offered a combination of all that was infamous, and it is astonishing that physicians and surgeons of honour and respectability should have contaminated themselves by any dealings with them. The professional gentlemen not only profited by their labours, but assisted them in their difficulties, and shielded them from legal prosecution, and assisted them when in the grasp of the law. Yet the objects of this patronage were as eager to defraud those who protected them as they were to betray their fellows, and they were perpetually

denouncing each other to the officers of the law. Nearly all combined other offences, such as horse-stealing, highway robbery, &c., with their regular profession, and were often transported or hung. One of the fraternity, named Millard, who had "worked" for Sir Astley Cooper, on being sentenced to imprisonment for robbing a grave, became infuriated against his patron because he did not obtain a free pardon for him, and swore he would have his life. On his dying in prison his wife published a curious pamphlet detailing his grievances, "An account of the circumstances attending the imprisonment and death of the late William Millard," in which a bitter attack was directed on Sir Astley Cooper, who was vilified for not obtaining the man's release, and settling a pension on his widow. With more show of reason it assailed the London hospitals, who were the real culprits and ran none of the risks which their instruments did.

Sir Astley Cooper's nephew gives some extraordinary instances of the manner in which the surgeons assisted their "friends" in difficulty. "When the regular Resurrectionists 'got into trouble,' especially if they were active and useful men, and there was nothing very flagrant in the case, the surgeons often advanced large sums of money to keep them out of gaol, or to supply their necessities during imprisonment. Sir Astley Cooper has expended hundreds of pounds for this purpose; nor did the expense rest here, for during

the confinement of the husbands, the support of their wives and families was a further tax upon him. The first three items in the following bill, which is copied from an account in my possession, will give some idea of the usual rate of these payments :—

1828.		£	s.	d.
Jan. 29.	Paid Mr. —, to pay Mr. —, half the expenses for bailing Vaughan from Yarmouth, and going down . . . . .	14	7	0
May 6.	Paid Vaughan's wife . . . . .	0	6	0
„ 29.	Paid Vaughan for 26 weeks' confinement, at 10s. per week . . . . .	13	0	0
	Four subjects, two male and two female (Murphy), at twelve guineas each . . . . .	50	8	0
June 18.	Paid Murphy, Wildes, and Naples, finishing money . . . . .	6	6	0

“When I was first appointed to the anatomical chair at Guy's Hospital,” says the same writer, “Murphy had been placed in confinement on account of some disturbances he had been committing in the churchyard at Yarmouth; a professional friend of mine went down to liberate him, and the amount of his expenditure on this occasion was 160*l.* Another friend of mine, an anatomical teacher, incurred an expense of 50*l.*, being the amount of a weekly allowance, continued for two years, to one of the Resurrectionists who was confined in prison.”

Though eager to secure what belonged to their rivals, the great hospitals showed, or what seemed so,

a praiseworthy desire to protect their own burial-grounds, and employed highly-paid watchmen to keep guard all night long. But this tender solicitude, it proved, was with a view to secure "the subjects" for themselves. It operated in this way:—

"They wished that the burial-ground connected with the institution should be maintained strictly inviolate, in order that such hospital patients as were conscious of approaching dissolution, might know that in that ground their bodies would remain undisturbed; a conviction which, strange to say, often produced on their minds a state of resigned feeling. From the influence produced by this regulation, many patients requested that their bodies might be 'examined' after death, because they thus secured a right of being buried at the expense of the hospital, a confidence which was never permitted to be abused."

For the especial protection of this ground a well-known and confidential Resurrectionist was handsomely paid to take up his nightly station in a watch-box on the premises during the dissecting season. For some months his presence effected the desired object; for he resisted every attempt made to bribe him or elude his observation. At last, however, upon the occasion of a body being buried there, of peculiar professional interest, one of the surgeons of the very institution, sent some men to obtain it, having offered an unusually large reward, as an inducement for them



to exert all their ingenuity on the occasion. They accordingly tried all the ordinary methods for acquiring possession of the prize, but were invariably baffled, until one evening, when they diverted the attention of the watchman as to their object, in making him drunk, and then succeeded in carrying off the prize.

Some of these adventures had a sort of farcical air, and were at least creditable to the ingenuity of their practitioners.

“An intimate friend of a Resurrectionist named Patrick was employed in the service of a gentleman, whose residence was at a short distance from London. One day this man called, in company with a fellow-servant, on Patrick, and informed him that his master was dead, and that he thought something in the way of business might be done with the body, as it was lying in a back parlour, the windows of which opened on to a large lawn. Patrick made several inquiries, and ascertained that the funeral was to take place on the following Sunday.

“And accordingly on the night of Saturday he entered at the back of the premises, and, being admitted to the parlour by the servant, commenced his operations. Unassisted by any light, he drew out all the screws, took off the lid, and, having formed an estimate, as accurate as the circumstances would allow, of the weight of the body, removed it into a

box which he had brought with him for the purpose of containing it. He next placed in the coffin a quantity of earth, which the servant had procured from the garden, corresponding to the weight of the corpse. The lid was then replaced, carefully screwed down, the pall thrown over it, and the box containing the body passed out of the window to Patrick. For this 'subject' Patrick received fifteen guineas. Being anxious to observe that all went off without interruption, he attended the funeral, which took place in a church adjoining the house."

Another of these fellows, in walking near a hospital, saw a person stagger and fall heavily on the ground. He impulsively ran to him with a view of offering assistance, but he had hardly reached him when the man ceased to live. The body-snatcher no sooner perceived this, than a new train of thoughts entered his mind. No one could have bewailed the loss of an attached relative with more sincerity than he affected to do, while soliciting the passers-by to assist him in conveying his cousin to the hospital, though he feared it was too late to offer any reasonable hope of his recovery. Having deposited him in the care of the house surgeon, to whom the body-snatcher was not known, he was told in as gentle a manner as kindly feeling could dictate, that the person was quite dead; upon which information the afflicted relative soon afterwards left. The following day, a coroner's

inquest having sat upon the body, he came for it and took it away in a shell and disposed of it to another hospital "for the benefit of science."

A favourite plan was to ascertain in the various poor-houses, infirmaries, and hospitals, within the Metropolis, the names and connections of those who had lately died in such institutions. On these occasions, if they found the bodies of any who seemed destitute of relations or friends, or at any rate, whose connections had exhibited very little concern about them, they would call on the proper officers, and assuming an appearance of distress, assert some close relationship with the deceased, and claim the body for the purpose of burial. The demand was not very unfrequently complied with, especially at the work-houses,—the officers at these establishments being neither anxious to investigate the rights insisted on by the applicants.

"The resurrection-men were occasionally despatched by surgeons on expeditions into the country to obtain possession of the bodies of those who had been subjected to some important operation, and of which a *post mortem* examination was of the greatest interest to science. Scarcely any distance from London was considered as an insuperable difficulty in the attaining of this object, and as certainly as the Resurrectionist undertook the task, so certain was he of completing it. This was usually an expensive undertaking, but

still it did not restrain the most zealous in their profession from occasionally engaging these men in this employment. Sir Astley Cooper, *as may be surmised from a consideration of his character*, was not backward in availing himself of these opportunities. I have known him send one of these men considerably more than a hundred miles to obtain a subject for the purpose of examining the effect of an operation performed years previously, actuated by the desire of acquiring a knowledge of any new facts which the inspection might afford.”<sup>1</sup>

This almost fanatical longing to prosecute the study of science was pushed to an incredible extent, and seems to have ended in a complete blunting of all feelings of propriety and respect for the rights of others. It will hardly be credited that a physician, who had been attending some interesting but perplexing case in the country, would be found coveting the patient after his decease, in order that he might satisfy his medical speculations.

<sup>1</sup> The following is a bill on account of one of these expeditions :—  
 “1820, June 1st.—Paid Hollis and Vaughan for getting a Subject from —, in the county of —, a man that Sir Astley Cooper performed an operation upon twenty-four years ago.

Coach for two there and back . . . . .	£3	12	0
Guards and Coachmen . . . . .	0	6	0
Expenses for two days . . . . .	1	14	6
Carriage of Subject, and porter . . . . .	0	12	6
Subject . . . . .	7	7	0
	<hr/>		
	£13	12	0

“A surgeon residing at or near the neighbourhood from which this subject was obtained, had watched the case there for years, and, on the death taking place, immediately wrote to Sir Astley. Sir Astley, on learning this event, sent for the person from whom I obtained the above account, and desired him to make an arrangement with the above-named men to obtain the subject, his concluding remark being, ‘*cost what it may.*’”

Cost what it may! So enthusiastic was this eminent surgeon, and so powerful his influence with these men, that there was no limit to the gratification of his wishes. “I heard him,” says his son, “when wishing to expose to a certain person the power of these men, and his influence over them, offer to procure, within three days, the body of *a dignified official personage*, who had been buried in a place apparently of impenetrable security. I have every reason to believe, that had he chosen, he could have effected this object.” Sir Astley Cooper, indeed, stated as much before a Committee of the House of Commons:—“The law does not prevent our obtaining the body of an individual if we think proper; for there is no person, let his situation in life be what it may, whom, if I were disposed to dissect, I could not obtain.” And in reply to another question, he said, “The law only enhances the price, and does not prevent the exhumation: nobody is secured by the law; it only adds to the price of the subject.”

There was an irresistible temptation for the sexton of a burying-ground to join in or connive at this spoliation. He was beset by the robbers with tempting bribes—or threats—and if he once yielded he was in the power of the confederates. One of the most noted of the fraternity had a curious history. He had been originally in the navy and the king's service. He was for some time on board the *Excellent*, and served in that vessel in the engagement off Cape St. Vincent. He returned to England after this battle, and having soon disposed of this prize-money, went on board a vessel cruising about the Channel. Becoming tired of this employment he ran away, and came to London, where he soon afterwards obtained the situation of a grave-digger to the Spa-fields burial-ground. Here he was entrapped into connection with the Resurrectionists by a Scotchman of the name of White. This man invented a most ingenious plan for combining the two callings. He first buried, then "snatched" the subject. He was obliged to be extremely cautious, for at one end of the ground was a house, in which resided two of the proprietors, while his own residence was immediately opposite. After a funeral had taken place, and the mourners left the ground, before commencing to fill up the grave, N—— used to remove the body out of the coffin, and place it in a sack, which he had ready for the purpose. He then threw in sufficient mould to cover

this, and afterwards gradually filled up the grave, taking care to draw the sack nearer and nearer to the surface as he proceeded, until it was covered only by a thin layer of loose earth, which formed the surface of the mound. At night he dragged it up out of this hiding-place, by means of the mouth of the sack, which he always left in such a position that it could be readily reached by him. This system was continued for two or three years, when one evening as White was carrying a subject along the streets, packed up as usual in a nut-basket, he was stopped by some Bow Street patrols, who insisted on examining his parcel. The subject was exposed, but White contrived to make his escape; an examination, however, was made of the various burial-places, to ascertain, if possible, the parties concerned in the transaction, and, among others, that of Spa-fields. After several graves had been opened, the vacant coffin was discovered, and N—— was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in the House of Correction, or the "Bastille," as it was familiarly called by the Exhumators. From this place N—— contrived to escape, in company with a fellow-prisoner, by making an opening through a skylight in the roof, and afterwards scaling the outer walls of the prison, by means of a rope which they had formed out of the oakum, the picking of which was their ordinary day's employment. N—— was afterwards retaken, in consequence of information given against

him by his enemy Crouch ; and it was only through the mediation of Sir Astley Cooper with the Secretary of State, that he escaped the punishment due to this aggravation of his original offence. He was more frequently imprisoned, perhaps, than any other Resurrectionist, and on each occasion in consequence of information given by Crouch, or some of his party.

As the Resurrectionists grew more violent and daring the public feeling began to be roused, an agitation sprang up, more vigilance was shown, and the service became one of corresponding danger. It was no unfrequent occurrence for them to be severely beaten, or perhaps fired at or captured by the guards, who were greatly increased in numbers, and in many cases both honest and vigilant, and thus every man employed in the business became liable to be shot, or at any rate to suffer a loss of liberty, often for a lengthened period of time. They were not so often wounded, however, as might have been expected. "A man, in whose veracity I had confidence," says Mr. Cooper, "told me he had been fired at five times, on each occasion without any injury whatever. Murphy, in scaling the wall at Bethnal Green churchyard, had once a very narrow escape, for a heavy charge from a blunderbuss fired by one of the watchmen, entered and shattered a brick scarcely an inch from his loin ; he was wounded by two or three of the shot."

Sometimes they found the coffin filled with quick-



lime, or buried so deeply as in certain soils to admit a foot of water above it. Occasionally, too, they met with cast-iron coffins in place of the usual wooden receptacles. The latter contrivance was considered as an insuperable obstacle to the Resurrectionists effecting their object, and indeed had they come generally into use, would have proved so, for although the lids could be readily broken into pieces by a sledge hammer, the noise which necessarily attended the operation was a sufficient preventive to its being carried into effect. The imperishable nature, however, of the material of which they were made, itself offered the objection to their employment, for in a few years every churchyard in London would have been thus rendered useless as a further receptacle for the dead.

As a further security the walls around the burial-places were now sometimes raised six or eight feet above their usual height, and several tiers of bricks left loose upon the summit, and broken glass or iron spikes placed there, in order to offer further obstacle to their being scaled. Added to these means of defence, parties of men were now and then set to watch the Resurrectionists into the inclosures, and while they were busily employed, would suddenly rush upon them, and attacking them, while unprepared, either capture them or beat them unmercifully.

Spring-guns were often set in various directions in

the churchyards, but these never answered the purpose intended by them. If a Resurrectionist proposed to work where these instruments of danger were used, and when he was not intimate with the grave-digger or watchman, he sent women in the course of the day into the ground, generally at a time when there was a funeral to note the position of the pegs to which the wires were to be attached. Having obtained this information, the first object of the party at night would be to feel for one of these, and having found it, they carefully followed the wire, till they came up to the gun, which was then raised from the surface of the grave mound (its usual position), and deposited safely at its foot.

An extraordinary episode is curious as illustrating not merely the rancorous vendettas that raged between the gangs, but some odd features of social manners ; such as the two old ladies who kept a private burying-ground as a source of income. Two of the men, Murphy and another, had been "fortunate enough," says Mr. Cooper, "to get a plentiful supply from a private burial-place near Holywell Mount, the property of two old women, whose premises indeed formed the entrance to it. The exhumators had gained access by forming an acquaintance with a man of the name of Whackett, who had the sole superintendence of the ground, and officiated moreover as grave-digger. This man was in the habit of remaining on duty until

sunset; and used, upon his departure, to leave the bolt of the gate undrawn, which although still locked, offered no impediment to the entrance of his friends, as he had supplied them with a key. Here Murphy and Patrick used to pay their nocturnal visits, and going over the ground looked for certain signs which their accomplice always left to point out the situation, of the particular bodies which he considered might be removed with the least fear of detection. With these facilities, they for some time carried on a most successful trade, and frequently brought away as many as six bodies in one night. This prosperity excited the astonishment and envy of their rivals in business as to the source from whence they obtained their supply; and some of them determined to adopt means either to participate in their harvest, or to discover and destroy the source from whence they reaped such benefits.

“Two of the exhumators, named Holliss and Vaughan, at last got scent of the scene of action, and as soon as they had discovered it, determined to make Whackett admit them ‘to a share of the job,’ or threaten to expose the whole transaction. The next day, accordingly, they tried to deceive him by saying, that although he was not aware of it, they were sharers with Murphy in the profits derived from his ground. Whackett obstinately resisted every attempt. Notwithstanding this opposition, they persisted in their

importunity, and at last enraged Whackett so much, that he ran across the street to a public-house which was full of labourers, and pointing through the windows to the two men, called out, 'Those fellows are body-snatchers, and are come here for the purpose of bribing me to let them raise from my ground.' This was enough: the whole party rushed out of the house, impressed with a common determination to inflict instant punishment upon these objects of their abhorrence. Vaughan and Hollis saw them approach, and guessing their intention, ran off, and outstripping them by their speed, altogether escaped.

“The spirit of retaliation urged the enraged and disappointed Vaughan and Holliss to seek revenge, and they went directly to a police-office where a magistrate was at the moment sitting, and, in the midst of a crowded court, informed him, in a loud tone, that if he sent officers to Holywell Mount burial-ground, they would find every grave despoiled of its dead; the grave-digger, Whackett, having sold them to the body-snatchers. The people present simultaneously caught an impulsive feeling of indignation, and hastened towards the spot. As they went along, their numbers increased, and having arrived at the burial-ground, they broke open the gates, and commenced digging up the graves. Whackett's escape was prevented, and he was made to witness the extent of his own depredations, until the mob, becoming more and more enraged

as the empty coffins were severally exposed, suddenly seized him, threw him into one of the deepest excavations, and began shovelling the earth over him. My informant told me he would certainly have been buried alive, had it not been for the activity of some of the constables, who had followed the people from the office. The excitement was so great that the mob went to Whackett's house, where they destroyed every article of his furniture, seized his wife and children, whom they dragged through a stagnant pool in the neighbourhood, and then proceeded to break the windows in the house of the two old women who were the owners of the property, although they were perfectly innocent, even of any connivance with the parties implicated in the transaction."

As may be imagined the Bow Street office had its share in detecting and prosecuting these villainies, and one of the most active officers, Ellis, who had been placed at the head of the Plymouth Police, availed himself of his town experience to frustrate the schemes of a gang who had arrived. One Vaughan, a skilled and successful Resurrectionist, had taken a house conveniently close to a churchyard, and had brought down two of his friends to assist him in the operations. It was suspected that they had come for smuggling purposes, and the *ci-devant* Bow Street Runner entered *con amore* into the business. "Disguising himself, he went on the following day to the dwelling of the suspected individuals, and, after

sauntering about some time, recognized Vaughan as a London body-snatcher, without being himself observed by any of the party. Ascertaining that two funerals were to take place the next day, he resolved to watch their movements, and habiting as a countryman, in a smock-frock, with other appropriate disguise, he attended at the burial as a mourner for one of the deceased. He was not surprised to see the whole of the suspected set, women as well as men, joining in the crowd which followed at the heels of the procession. No sooner were the bodies committed to the grave, than Ellis went back to Plymouth; but being now fully convinced of the intentions of the party, he returned to the churchyard at nightfall, bringing with him three men. So determined was he to get every proof of the guilt of Vaughan and his party, that he apprised the relatives of the deceased of his suspicions. Thus prepared, Ellis and his party secreted themselves in the churchyard, and about ten o'clock saw the exhumators commence their work, and soon afterwards deposit the bodies in their place of dwelling.

“ In about an hour, after watching the house, Ellis rapped at the door. Vaughan himself obeyed the summons, and immediately recognizing Ellis, who had thrown aside his disguise, hurriedly asked him what had brought him there so late at night. On learning his errand, he begged of him, with apparent indifference, to search the house. A signal was immediately given

by Ellis, his assistants came up, entered the house with him, and the bodies were found secreted in a back kitchen. The relatives of the exhumed bodies were sent for, and at once identified them, and the whole party of Resurrectionists, before daylight, was safely lodged in the gaol at Plymouth.

“This outrage was rendered felonious, instead of being a mere misdemeanour, by the circumstance of their having taken some of the clothes in which the bodies had been buried. They were sentenced to seven years’ transportation.”

It is not generally known that one of our greatest humourists was subjected to this indignity. After dying in a lonely, deserted fashion in a Bond Street lodging, his dissolution being witnessed by a footman who had accidentally called, the Rev. Mr. Sterne, the delightful “Yorick,” was interred in the Paddington burial-ground, where his monument, set up by strangers, can still be seen. Two days after the body was taken up or “snatched,” and sent down to Cambridge, having been “disposed of for the benefit of science,” to Mr. Collignon, M.B., Professor of Anatomy in that University. He invited some amateurs to witness his “demonstration,” and one gentleman, who was acquainted with the departed Shandean, was greatly shocked at recognizing his departed friend.

## CHAPTER XI.

### MURDER OF THE ITALIAN BOY.

WHEN Mr. Dickens, then a young man full of bright promise, was taken over Newgate, some fifty years ago, what chiefly struck him were two horrible casts of murderers' heads, whose aspect, he said, warranted summary execution at any time. There were seen in the horrible row, Bishop and Williams—names that at one period excited a thrill. A few will recall, personally or by tradition, the "Murder of the Italian Boy," as it was called, and the extraordinary excitement it occasioned. The reason was that it touched all the sources of popular sympathy and terror. There was the hideous type of the murderers which excited repulsion; the even more odious object of the deed, which was to sell the body of the hapless victim for dissection; whilst the hideous fashion in which the deed was carried out belonged to the vilest type of melodrama.

In the year 1831 the public had not recovered from the effect of the discoveries connected with the Burke and Hare atrocities, and there was an uneasy feeling



abroad that the system was still being pursued, though undetected. There were many instances of mysterious disappearance assumed to be associated with the hideous traffic. The surgeons, however, in their ardour for science, pursued their old course, purchasing what was brought to them, and thus holding out irresistible inducement to the ruffians who lived by the traffic.

On November 5th, Mr. Partridge, the professor of anatomy at King's, was personally informed by the porter of the hospital that a subject had been offered for sale, about which there were circumstances of suspicion. It had been brought by two villainous-looking fellows, Bishop and May, who, however, were the regular providers of such things to the institution. A dispute arose about the price—whether it should be nine or ten guineas, but it was agreed that the subject “should come in”—that being the technical phrase—at nine guineas. In the afternoon it was brought in a hamper. When the body was inspected, it was remarked that it had the look of not having been buried. There was a cut on the forehead, though this appears to have been the result of an accident after the death. This Mr. Partridge, many years later, attracted notice from his expedition to Italy to extract the ball from Garibaldi's wound, and in which task the famous Nelaton was more successful. Having made a regular examination, and found all the evidence of

violence, he sent out for change of a 50*l.* note, as an excuse for detaining the men. The police arrived promptly, and conveyed them to Bow Street. This was destined to be the first important inquiry of the newly-formed "force," and the eyes of the kingdom were upon them. It was noticed that the prisoners were in a state of drunkenness. May declared that he had nothing to do with it, that "the subject was that gentleman's," pointing to Bishop. Two other men, who had assisted in carrying the hamper—Williams and Shields—were also charged.

It was presently discovered that the victim was a poor Italian boy, named Carlo Ferrari, who carried about white mice, which he had trained to revolve a circular cage—a once familiar form of street entertainment. The coroner's jury found a verdict against persons unknown, but intimated that grave suspicion attached to the prisoners.

A visit was made to the house where they lived, which was No. 3, Nova Scotia Gardens, in Bethnal Green, then a sort of suburb. Mr. Minshul, the Bow Street magistrate, undertook the whole investigation of the case, and it was through his exertions that the affair was successfully investigated and the evidence collected. The house was a semi-detached one with a curious roof that sloped from the front wall to the back. It had a garden behind, in which was a well. This well involved as hideous a mystery as did the

one in Miss Braddon's novel. The first thing done was to search the place thoroughly, when clothes stained with blood were found. At successive searches, the gardens were pricked all over with iron rods, and then regularly dug up to a depth of some feet. Here clothes that would fit a boy were found concealed, all torn and stained with blood. The house next door belonged to Williams; so that both residences were in possession of the fraternity. On searching the next house, a woman's clothes were found buried, with evidence that a regular system of murder had been pursued. As all these discoveries took place, the popular excitement became frantic: mobs gathered, and were with difficulty prevented from wrecking the house; thousands of persons were allowed to view the premises on payment of a small fee; and, as the police pursued their diggings, enormous crowds looked on; the inquiry meantime proceeding at Bow Street, until November 25th, when the three prisoners were committed for trial. Before this took place, it was already ascertained that some of the clothes had belonged to a woman named Pigburn, who had mysteriously disappeared, and who, it was ascertained, had been decoyed away and murdered for sale to the surgeons.

The trial took place on December 2nd, 1831. The three prisoners were charged with the murder of the boy Ferrari, but there seems to have been some uncertainty as to the identity of the body; so a second

count was added, charging the murder of a person unknown. Mr. Adolphus was for the prosecution. The case was clearly proved. The details produced general horror, and the wretches were found guilty and sentenced, when, as was to be expected, they displayed the most abject terror. It was remarked, however, that May alone showed some firmness, and, when they were being removed, was heard to exclaim: "*I am a murdered man!*"

The day being fixed for this execution, and the condemned sermon having been preached to them, two of them made confessions. Of Bishop's, the following is a portion:—

"*I, John Bishop, do hereby declare and confess that the boy supposed to be an Italian boy was a Lincolnshire boy. I and Williams took him to my house about half-past ten o'clock on Thursday night, the 3rd of November, from the 'Bell,' in Smithfield. He walked home with us. Williams promised to give him some work. Williams went with him from the 'Bell' to the Old Bailey watering-house, whilst I went to the 'Fortune of War.'* Williams came from the Old Bailey watering-house to the 'Fortune of War' for me, leaving the boy standing at the corner of the court by the watering-house in the Old Bailey. I went directly with Williams to the boy, and we then walked all three to the Nova Scotia Gardens, taking a pint of stout at a public-house near Holywell Lane, Shoreditch, on our

way, of which we gave the boy a part. We only stayed just to drink it, and walked on to my house, where we arrived about eleven o'clock. My wife and children and Mrs. Williams were not gone to bed, so we put him in the closet and told him to wait there for us. Williams went in, and told them to go to bed, and I remained in the garden. Williams came out directly, and we both walked out of the garden a little way, to give time to the family getting to bed. We returned in about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, and listened outside the window to ascertain whether the family were gone to bed. All was quiet; and we then went to the boy in the closet, and took him into the house. We lighted a candle, and gave the boy some bread and cheese; and after he had eaten, we gave him a cupful of rum, with about half a small phial of laudanum in it. I had bought the rum the same evening in Smithfield, and the laudanum also in small quantities at different shops. There was no water or other liquid put into the cup with the rum and laudanum. The boy drank the contents of the cup directly in two draughts, and afterwards a little beer. In about ten minutes he fell asleep in the chair on which he sat, and I removed him from the chair to the floor, and laid him on his side. We then went out and left him there. We then had a quartern of gin and a pint of beer at the 'Feathers,' near Shoreditch Church, and then went home again, having been away from the

boy about twenty minutes. We found him asleep as we had left him. We took him directly, asleep and insensible, into the garden, and tied a cord to his feet to enable us to pull him up by. I then took him in my arms, and let him slide from them headlong into the well in the garden; whilst Williams held the cord to prevent the body going altogether too low in the well. He was nearly wholly in the water, his feet being just above the surface. Williams fastened the other end of the cord round the paling, to prevent the body getting beyond our reach. The boy struggled a little in the water with his arms and legs, and the water bubbled a minute. We waited till these symptoms were past, and then went indoors, and I think we went out and walked down Shoreditch to occupy the time; but in three-quarters of an hour we returned and took him out of the well, by pulling him by the cord attached to his feet. We undressed him in the paved yard, rolled his clothes up, and buried them where they were found by the witness who produced them. We carried the boy into the washhouse, laid him on the floor, and covered him with a bag. We left him there, and went and had some coffee in Old Street Road, and then (a little before two in the morning of Friday) went back to my house. We immediately doubled the body up, and put it into a box, which we corded so that nobody might open it to see what it was, and then went again and had some more

coffee at the same place in the Old Street Road, where we stayed a little time, and then went home to bed—both in the same house and in our own beds, as usual. We slept till about ten o'clock on Friday morning, when we got up, took breakfast together with the family, and went both of us to the 'Fortune of War,' in Smithfield. We had something to eat and drink there; and after we had something to eat May came in."

He then gives an account of the other murders, notably of the unfortunate woman they had decoyed into this den:—

"*I also confess*, that I and Williams were concerned in the murder of a female, whom I believe to have been since discovered to be Frances Pigburn, on or about the 9th of October last. I and Williams saw her sitting, about eleven or twelve at night, on the step of a door in Shoreditch, near the church. She had a child, four or five years old, with her on her lap. I asked why she was sitting there. She said she had no home to go to, for her landlord had turned her out into the street. I told her she might go home with us, and sit by the fire all night. She said she would go with us, and walked with us to my house in Nova Scotia Gardens, carrying her child with her. When we got there we found the family in bed, and we took the woman in, and lighted a fire, by which we all sat down together. I went out for beer, and we all partook of bread and beer and rum (I had brought

the rum from Smithfield in my pocket). The woman and her child lay down on some dirty linen on the floor, and I and Williams went to bed. About six in the morning I and Williams told her to go away and to meet us at the 'London Apprentice,' in Old Street Road, at one o'clock; this was before our families were up. She met us again at one o'clock at the 'London Apprentice.' She had no child with her. We gave her some halfpence and beer, and desired her to meet us again at ten o'clock at night at the same place. After this we bought rum and laudanum at different places, and at ten o'clock we met the woman again at the 'London Apprentice,' without her child. We drank about three pints of beer, and stayed about an hour. We should have stayed there longer, but an old man came in who knew the woman, and she said she did not like him to see her there with anybody. We therefore all went out. It rained hard, and we took shelter under a doorway in the Hackney Road for about half an hour. We then walked to Nova Scotia Gardens, and I led her to No. 2, an empty house adjoining my house. We had no light. Williams stepped out into the garden with the rum and the laudanum, which I handed to him. He there mixed them together in a half-pint bottle, and came into the house to me and the woman, and we gave her the bottle to drink. She drank the whole in two or three draughts. There was a quartern of rum and



about half a phial of laudanum. She sat down on the step between the two rooms of the house. She went off to sleep in about ten minutes. She was falling back; I caught her to save her fall, and laid her back on the floor. Then Williams and I went to a public-house, got something to drink, and in about half an hour came back to the woman. We took her cloak off, tied a cord to her feet, carried her to the well in the garden, and thrust her into it headlong. She struggled very little afterwards, and the water bubbled a little at the top. We fastened the cord to the palings to prevent her going down beyond our reach, and took a walk to Shoreditch and back in about half an hour. We left the woman in the well this length of time, that the rum and laudanum might run out of her mouth. On our return we took her out of the well, cut her clothes off, put them down the closet of the empty house, carried the body into the washhouse of my own house, where we doubled it up, and put it in a hair-box, which we corded, and left it there. We did not go to bed; but went to Shields' house in Eagle Street, Red Lion Square, and called him up between four and five in the morning. We then went with Shields to a public-house near the Sessions House, Clerkenwell, and had some gin; from thence to my house, and stayed a little to wait the change of the policè. I told Shields he was to carry the trunk to the London Hospital. He asked if there was a woman in the house, who

could walk alongside of him, so that people might not take any notice. Williams called his wife up, and asked her to walk with Shields, and to carry a hat-box, which he gave her. There was nothing in it, but it was tied up as if there were. We then put the box with the body on Shields' head, and went to the hospital, Shields and Mrs. Williams walking on one side of the street, and I and Williams on the other. At St. Thomas's Hospital I saw Mr. South's footman, and sent him upstairs to Mr. South, to ask if he wanted a subject. The servant brought me word that his master wanted one, but could not give an answer till the next day, as he had not time to look at it. During this interview, Shields, Williams and his wife were waiting at a public-house. I then went to Mr. Appleton at Mr. Grainger's, and agreed to sell it to him for eight guineas; and afterwards I fetched it from St. Thomas's Hospital and took it to Mr. Appleton's, who paid me five pounds then and the rest on the following Monday. After receiving the five pounds I went to Shields and Williams and his wife at the public-house, when I paid Shields 10s. for his trouble, and we all went to the 'Flower Pot,' at Bishopsgate, where we had something to drink, and then went home. I never saw the child after the first time before mentioned. She said she had left the child with the person she had taken her things to, before her landlord took her goods. The woman murdered did not tell us her

name; she said her age was thirty-five, and that her husband, before he died, was a cabinetmaker. She was thin, rather tall, and very much marked with the smallpox.

“*I also confess* the murder of a boy, who told us his name was Cunningham. It was a fortnight after the woman. I and Williams found him sleeping, about eleven and twelve o'clock at night on Friday, the 21st October, as I think, under the pig hoards at Pig Market, Smithfield. Williams woke him, and asked him to come along with him, and the boy walked with Williams and me to my house in Nova Scotia Gardens. We took him into my house, and gave him some warm beer sweetened with sugar, with rum and laudanum in it. He drank two or three cupsful, and then fell asleep in a little chair belonging to one of my children. We then laid him on the floor and went out and got something to drink, and then returned, carried the boy to the well, and threw him in it in the same way as we served the other boy and the woman. He died instantly in the well, and we left him there to give time for the mixture to run out of his body. We then took the body from the well, tore off the clothes and buried them in the garden. The body we carried into the washhouse, and put it into the same box, and left it there till that same evening, when we got a porter to carry it to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where I sold it to Mr. Smith for eight guineas. This boy lived in

Kent Street with his mother, but said he had not been home for a twelvemonth or more. He was about ten or eleven years old."

It will be seen that all exculpated May, and this, though not conclusive, had weight with the authorities. A curious dramatic scene occurred when the final decision was conveyed to the criminals. Dr. Cotton, the chaplain, and Mr. Wontner came to the three convicts, and instead of announcing what they had to tell, the clergyman produced a paper which he began to read with all formality. The unhappy men were kept in suspense, and the agonies of May and "the anxious attention" of the others were naturally extraordinary. "His agitation was dreadful," and when the reader came to the words "that the execution of the sentence upon John May shall be respited during his Majesty's most gracious pleasure," he fell to the ground as "if struck by lightning." So severe was the fit that those present thought he could never recover, so that it was naively believed "the warrant of mercy had proved his death-blow." When he came to himself his tumults of joy were extraordinary, "and he poured forth his gratitude to God and to the persons who had exerted themselves for him." He added that when the reverend gentleman began to read his communication he thought it was his death-warrant, and that on hearing he was to be spared "he thought his heart had burst in his bosom."

All hope being now gone for the others, attempts were made to prepare them for death which were not received in a very encouraging way. Williams on being pressed to listen to some religious reading, said roughly, "I had religious talk enough during the day; I will have none of it to-night." He, however, addressed this precious piece of counsel to his fellows:—

"If you will be kind enough to let my brother prisoners know the awful death I shall have suffered when you receive this, it will, through your expostulations, prevent them from increasing their crimes when they may be liberated, and tell them *bad company and drinking and blasphemy is the foundation of all evil*. Give my brotherly love to them, and tell them never to deviate from the paths of religion, and have a firm belief in their blessed Saviour."

Descriptions given of executions, though having a sort of hideous interest, can never be found acceptable, and the curtain may well be allowed to fall at the close of the trial. What occurred on the occasion of these two wretches being "finished" by the law is so dramatic, and has been told in so exciting a fashion, that it will certainly be found of interest—not less remarkable as a survival of the old barbarous days, are the singular proceedings that followed it, which seem now well-nigh incredible.

Bishop's demeanour was that of abject terror;

he seemed to relapse into his former stupor; his eye was bent on the ground, and he moved mechanically up to the officer, who stood ready to tie his hands, the wrists being closely pressed, when he stretched forth his arms. When that part of the preparation was concluded, he turned round and allowed his arms to be pinioned. This done, he took his seat at a side bench, without uttering a word. One of the under-sheriffs took a seat at his side, and in a low tone asked him if he had anything to confess. His answer was, "No, sir, I have told all." Williams was next introduced, and came into the room with the same short, hasty step which was noticed at the time of his sentence. Since then, however, his whole appearance had undergone the most terrible alteration. That cunning and flippant air which was noticed in him on his trial had left him. His look, as he entered the press-room on Monday, was one of downright horror—every limb trembled as he approached the officer by whom he was to be pinioned, and his hands shook to that degree that one person was obliged to hold them up, while another bound them together. While submitting to this operation he frequently ejaculated, "Oh, I have deserved this, and more!" One of the under-sheriffs asked him whether he had anything more on his mind, or wished to make any further disclosure. He replied, "Oh, no, sir, I have told all—I hope I am now at peace with God. What I have told is the truth!"

“ At a few minutes before eight the sheriffs, accompanied by their officers and the prisoners, proceeded towards the scaffold, the ordinary reciting part of the funeral service. Bishop moved on in the same gloomy and despondent manner, which we have noticed. His appearance underwent no change as he approached the foot of the scaffold. Williams became more and more agitated as he advanced. Just as he came to the room which led out to the drop, he expressed a wish to see the Rev. Mr. Russell once more. That gentleman came forward, and while Bishop was being led out seated himself near him. Mr. Russell said to him, ‘ Now, Williams, you have another moment intervening between you and death, and, as a dying man, I implore you, in God’s name, to tell the truth ; have you told me the whole truth, Williams ? ’ ‘ All I have told you is true, Mr. Russell. ’ ‘ But, Williams, have you told me *all* ? ’ Williams gave him this singular answer : ‘ All I have told you is quite true. ’ ”

This was the last remark he made, and in a few moments he ascended the scaffold.

The scene without the prison was no less exciting. There was an immense assembly on the spot. The crowd, as early as one o’clock in the morning, had amounted to several thousand persons, and continued rapidly increasing. By five o’clock nearly two-thirds of the Old Bailey were filled with a dense mass of people. The continued buzz among the multitude

at this time, the glare of light from the torches that were used to enable the workmen to proceed with their labours, and the terrific struggles among the crowd, altogether presented a scene which those who witnessed it will not soon forget. When the fatal drop was stationed in its usual place, it was observed that three chains were suspended from it. As soon as Mr. Wontner, the governor, heard of it, he ordered an officer to remove one of them, in consequence of May having been respited. This was done, and although it was then dark, it was instantly communicated throughout the vast assemblage, and a general cry of "*May is respited,*" was uttered on all sides.

At daybreak there was not less than from thirty thousand to forty thousand persons assembled. In fact, from one end of the Old Bailey to the other was a dense mass, and the streets in the neighbourhood, although not a glance could be had of the platform or the proceedings, were, from an early hour, rendered impassable by the throng of persons hurrying towards the scene of execution. The assemblage was the largest that had ever been witnessed on an occasion of the kind since the execution of Holloway and Heggerty, upwards of twenty years before. Notwithstanding the precautions taken to prevent accidents, several occurred at the end of Giltspur Street, immediately opposite the "Compter," where a very heavy barrier had been erected, and which gave way.



At eight o'clock the procession began to move from the press-room, the appearance of the executioner and his assistant on the scaffold indicated that the last ceremony was at hand. A general cry of "Hats off!" took place, and the immense multitude uncovered. Bishop was first conducted to the scaffold, and his appearance was the signal for the most tremendous groans, yells, and hootings from all parts of the crowd. The wretched man came forward apparently unmoved by the dreadful reception he experienced. The executioner proceeded at once to the performance of his duty, and having put the rope round his neck, and fixed it to the chain, placed him under the fatal beam. A terrific cheer from the crowd proclaimed their satisfaction at the completion of the preparation for his exit to the other world; but still, though placed on the brink of eternity, and about to be launched into it amidst the execrations of his fellow-creatures, the miserable criminal betrayed scarce a symptom of fear. The same listless, sullen manner that had marked his conduct throughout, appeared to be preserved by him to the last moment. Not a muscle appeared to be moved, not a limb to shake, though he remained during the awful interval of two minutes that elapsed before Williams was brought forward, exposed to the indignant hootings of the multitude.

Williams next ascended the scaffold, on reaching which he bowed to the crowd, who returned his salu-

tation by the most dreadful yells and groans. He appeared to labour under extreme anguish, and his demeanour formed a complete contrast to that of his guilty associate. While the cap was being put over his eyes, and the rope adjusted by the executioner, his whole frame was convulsed by a universal tremor. The Rev. Mr. Cotton having engaged him in prayer—in which Williams appeared to join fervently, wringing his hands and ejaculating aloud—gave the signal for the falling of the drop, when they were launched into eternity. Bishop appeared to die almost instantaneously, but Williams struggled several minutes. The moment the drop fell, the crowd, which had been yelling all the time, *set up a shout of exultation* that was prolonged for several minutes!

The bodies having been suspended for the usual time were cut down at nine o'clock. That operation was performed by the executioner, amidst the shouts and jeers of the crowd, which still continued very great. An extraordinary and barbarous incident succeeded.

Immediately after, a small cart drove up to the platform, and the bodies of the two culprits were placed in it, covered by two sacks. The cart then moved on at a slow pace, followed by the sheriffs and City Marshal and a large body of constables, along Giltspur Street to the house of Mr. Stone, 33, Hosier Lane. The vast crowd yelling and making other dis-





MAY. WILLIAMS. BISHOP.  
*A Sketch taken at Bow Street*

cordant noises as they proceeded. On reaching Mr. Stone's it was with difficulty the bodies could be removed from the cart, the crowd appearing anxious to get possession of them. The bodies were placed on a table, and in the presence of the Sheriffs (in conformity with their duty) an incision was made in their chests, after which they withdrew. The bodies were removed that night, Bishop's to the King's College, Williams' to the Theatre of Anatomy in Windmill Street, Haymarket, to be dissected. They were publicly exhibited at both places on Tuesday and Wednesday, when immense crowds of persons were admitted to see their remains.

The skeletons of the two criminals still adorn the museums of the schools in which their bodies were dissected. To complete the extraordinary inversion of all laws, human and divine, exhibited in this case, it was found later that the convict Bishop had been married to his own step-mother!

Notwithstanding the minuteness of the confessions, the full truth had not been told. Even when ascending the scaffold Williams could not resist some evasion in the form of his replies. It was the general opinion that they were responsible for many more unconfessed murders. This, it has been remarked, is one of the invariable incidents of such confessions—the explanation of which is that the murderer cannot bring himself to forfeit all chance of a reprieve.

A common form of evasion is to declare they have been condemned on false evidence, meaning—which may be true—that the act did not take place in the exact way detailed at the trial. The recent case of Lipski, where the murderer was actually writing his confession when a reprieve arrived (on which he tore it up), might be a warning to others to withhold confession to the last moment, after the cynical opinion of Mr. Raikes' friend “never to throw away a chance.”

It may be noted in this place that one of the best testimonies to the truth of Lavater's doctrines might be found in the repulsive hideousness of many notorious malefactors, whose faces seem to indicate the foulness of their hearts. If, as old Macklin once remarked, “God writes a legible hand” their villainy was unquestionable. It is scarcely fair, however, to the murderer, to accept the evidence of these dreadful “casts taken after death,” for allowance must be made for the violence of the process by which the patient was despatched; and we could fancy an apologist for this class of the community—it might have been De Quincy—making protest against thus unfairly condemning this unhappy section of society. On the other hand, there are some heads—such as that of Dr. Dodd, now before me—executed for far less heinous offences—which do not at all exhibit these odious traits.

Some of the persons who have been brought up at

Bow Street, have presented awful types of this hideousness of crime. If the portrait is to be trusted, a woman, named Gibbs, charged in June, 1799, with extorting money from innocent persons, seems to have exceeded all precedent, and to have abused the privilege of criminals to be hideous. An unfortunate man named Jeremiah Beck had been her victim. She had waylaid him in Kensington Gardens, and succeeded in extorting from his fears various small sums. By an unlucky chance she had attempted the same system with no less a person than Dr. Ford, the Ordinary of Newgate, who, when she came under his professional charge, "had an opportunity of exhibiting his generosity of soul." The Press were generally struck with this abnormal hideousness, describing her with much heartiness as "an ill-favoured, disgusting figure," and there was some humorous surprise at a person under such disabilities selecting a department for which some small share of good looks were necessary to give even a plausible air to the accusation.

## CHAPTER XII.

SIR J. DEAN PAUL AND CO.

IN most police cases, as they are called, there is a sameness, and even vulgarity which arises from the display of the "seamy-side" presented in all its repulsive force. But there is occasionally found a dramatic spirit which elevates the episode to a higher level, owing either to the appearance of persons whose position in life, or whose private life, it might be supposed, had set them above the temptations of those who have become victims of circumstances, or some cruel and unfortunate combination. Here we have the elements of surprise and expectation to pique or excite curiosity. For such incidents the ingenious novelist, such as the late Mr. Charles Reade, warily looks, and notes and turns to his profit. Few cases have so answered these conditions as the one we are about to enter upon.

In the year 1855 there were few persons in London whose name was mentioned with greater respect and sympathy than that of Sir John Dean Paul, well-known as one of the "good-people," connected with that





# AD EXECUTION

## Williams, & John Bishop,

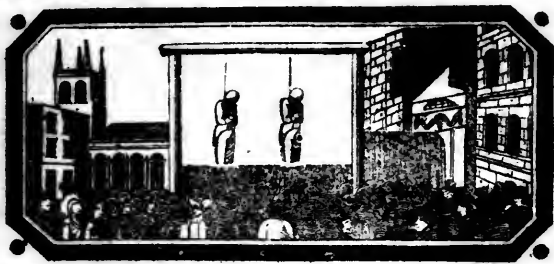
FOR THE

### murder of an Italian Boy.

Who were Executed this Morning at the Old Bailey.

## Confession of Bishop & Williams!

Printed at BIRT'S, who have and sell  
 Long and Pall Mall Warehouses, No. 39,  
 Great St. Andrew-Street, Seven, Dials,  
 London.  
 Country Orders punctually attended to.



Handbills, Cards, &c. Printed on  
 the finest paper, and cheaper than  
 any House in London.  
 One trial will prove the fact!

**JOHN BISHOP**, aged 34, **THOMAS WILLIAMS**, aged 30 and **JAMES MAY**, aged 26, were indicted for the Wilful Murder of Carlo Ferriau, otherwise Charles Ferrier, & when placed at the bar, they seemed but little moved by the awful situation in which they were placed. A number of witnesses were examined, and from their evidence, the following particulars transpired.—On Saturday the 5th of November, the above three men took the body of a boy to the King's College, in the Strand, for the purpose of disposing of it for dissection, and for which they asked twelve guineas; but one of the surgeons on examining it found a fracture on the back part of the head, which made him imagine that the boy had been murdered, and mentioning his suspicions to another of the profession, they kept bargaining with the men, while a messenger was dispatched to the Police Station, in Covent Garden, and procured the assistance of several constables, who, after a great resistance, secured the prisoners, and conveyed them to Bow-street, where they underwent an examination, but no person being enabled to identify the body, they were remanded for another hearing. On the Sunday, the body was proved to be that of a poor Italian Boy, who travelled about London, with some white mice and a living tortoise, and the body having been opened by the surgeons, they stated that the poor fellow had been murdered. It was proved that Bishop & Williams resided in a cottage called Nova Scotia Gardens, Bethnal-green, and that the poor Italian boy, whose death is the subject of the present examination, was noticed within 20 yards of their house, with his mice and tortoise, and has ever been seen since; a hackney coach was also observed to drive up to the corner of Nova Scotia Gardens, and three men, Bishop, May and Williams jump out of it, and proceed to Bishop's house, and soon returned with a sack, containing something heavy, which May had on his back, and Bishop holding it up behind. After it was put in they drove off, supposed for some hospital, on purpose to dispose of the body. Since the prisoners had been in custody, the premises of Bishop and Williams were strictly examined, and in the privy were found several large pieces of human flesh, and the entire scalp of female with portions of the hair attached to it. The garden behind Bishop's house was carefully searched by digging, and two jackets, two pair of trousers, two waistcoats, and two shirts were found buried in the earth. The privy of the next house was also searched, & a bundle discovered, which on inspection was found to contain an entire suit of female apparel.

On the conclusion of the evidence, the Judge summed up & the Jury returned a verdict of **GUILTY** against Bishop, May, and Williams.

The prisoners each put in a written defence, declaring that they were innocent of the Murder of the boy, but ac-

knowledged themselves as resurrectionists for many years. The Recorder then in an impressive manner, passed the awful sentence of death upon them, exhorting them to prepare for the change they would soon undergo, he then sentenced them to be executed on Monday morning, and their bodies delivered over for dissection, and to be anatomised. The prisoners heard the sentence unmoved, and when they were ordered to be taken from the bar, May raised his voice, and in a firm voice said, "I am a murdered man, and that man (pointing to Bishop) knows it."

### Confession of Bishop and Williams.

On Bishop's return to prison after his trial, he seemed quite aware of his approaching dissolution, and on Saturday morning, being attended by the Rev. Mr. Williams, of Hendon, he made a confession of the Murders of which he had been guilty. He admitted that he had been concerned in the commission of FIVE Murders—that of the Italian boy; of Frances Pighutti, the woman whose clothes were found in the privy; of a drover boy, who had come to Southfield with cattle from Lincolnshire; a young child, and also a poor negro man. He entered into a minute description, most horrible in its details, of the mode by which he had perpetrated the inhuman murders. Their method of destroying victims was by giving them laudanum to render them insensible, and then by throwing them headfirst into the cess-pool in Bishop's garden.—Williams also made a confession, and stated that the body which was sworn to as the Italian boy, was that of a drover boy in Southfield, about 15 years of age, whom he carried to their house in Nova Scotia Gardens, when they gave him some tea, and he became stupefied. They then took him into the garden, under the pretence of conducting him to the privy, and on their way threw him down, and pushing his head into the water, held him until he was suffocated.

Both men declared that May was not necessary to any of the Murders, and in consequence several gentlemen waited upon the Judge who tried them, and had four hours conference with him; no respite was granted, and on Saturday evening a warrant was sent to Newgate ordering the execution of the three.

This morning before day-break every place that could command a view of the place of execution was crowded to excess, and when the Murderers ascended the drefs, the yells & groans of the populace were deafening, and continued without intermission till the drop fell.—Their bodies will be given to the King's College for dissection.

YE tender hearts that love to share  
 Another's grief or joy,  
 How will ye bleed to hear the tale,  
 Of the poor Italian Boy!  
 While once within his bosom confided  
 He slept across his breast;  
 And friendless, for his'daily bread,  
 Through London streets he prest.

To Bethnal Green he bent his way,  
 As hapless fate design'd,  
 Nor thought when never doing harm  
 A Murderer's blow to find!  
 Bishop, with Williams, basely there  
 The hearts to pity steel'd,  
 Did to the horrid Barking plan  
 Their cruel natures yield!

His teeth they to a Dentist sold,  
 On wicked hearts he beat,  
 And with his body in a sack,  
 Straight to King's College went;  
 But Heaven that saw the cruel deed,  
 His stopp'd their vile career,  
 And sacred justice for the crime,  
 Has doom'd a death of fear!

And on a public scaffold now,  
 Unpitied and forlorn,  
 These wretched culprits they have  
 The mark of public scorn!  
 And like their victims shall be knives  
 Of Surgeons strip each vein  
 Tho' unlike them they will not feel,  
 The murderers dying pain.

immense denomination, "the Religious Societies," and one of the heads of a snug, old-fashioned banking company, "Strahan's." For any good or charitable work Sir John Dean Paul's name was always sought and found on some substantial cheque. At meetings of the true Exeter Hall flavour, "opened with prayer," he was to be seen in person. This sort of reputation is as good as "Capital" itself, and it speaks well for public feeling in this country that whereas in France such a character is looked on with suspicion, perhaps from the recollection of Tartuffe, in England the combination of religion and villainy on a great scale, is thought too odious and almost incredible to be accepted.

One morning, June 23rd, 1855, the town was astonished to learn that the sound old-fashioned bank "Strahan's" had failed, and that the pious Sir John and his partners had been brought to Bow Street, where they were charged with fraud and swindling. Many now will recall the astonishment and incredulity with which this news was received. After a few hearings, a strange story of swindling, of the most coarse and vulgar type, was revealed, and the three partners, Strahan, Bates, and the "Saint" Sir John, were found to have been carrying on a system that differed in no respect from the worst of the ordinary "street charges" dealt with at the office.

Strahan's Bank was an old established one, in favor

with simple country customers. It was originally "Snow, Paul, and Co.," but about the year 1838 a Mr. Bates and Strahan came into the business. A Prebendary of Rochester, Dr. Griffiths, had been one of their oldest customers, and had banked there for thirty years. At one time he took a fancy to make a large purchase of Dutch bonds, which were procured for him to the value of nearly 30,000*l.* At the bank he had a private box, of which the partners had one key, and he another, the bonds were carefully secured, and, as he fancied, good easy man! in safe keeping. Every half-year the interest was received and duly posted to his account.

Towards the end of the year 1854 it was remarked with some surprise that the good Sir John was making many visits to other banks, discount-houses, &c., for the purpose of turning securities into money. Of the other partners, Bates was an old man, and did not take much share in the business, while Strahan lived "in style" at a handsome place in the country, and was reputed to be very wealthy. Sir John had a mansion near Reigate. It was suspected that the bank was in a crisis. Sir John at the time addressed a letter to Gurney's Bank which ran: "My dear friend, you will greatly oblige me by raising as much money as these securities will cover, *pending the purchase of an estate.* You know for what purpose, and also my reasons for not wishing my name to appear.'

The securities sent were a parcel of Dutch bonds, representing some 26,000*l.* in normal value, and on these the banker wished to raise 30,000*l.* “for the purchase of an estate.” The Gurneys agreed to undertake the transaction, and offered to procure 27,000*l.*, which was done. Other operations of the same kind were undertaken, and securities representing about 113,000*l.* in all were thus disposed of. Nothing would do, however, the bank was tottering to its fall, and presently had to close its doors. The city articles were mildly severe on the directors, and their general imprudence; it was said, too, that the bank had been kept open some days longer than it should have been, for they had continued paying out till there was scarcely anything left. One lucky man thus succeeded in getting a large deposit which he would otherwise have lost. Bankruptcy proceedings in the usual way were begun, and among the Exeter Hall folk there was much pity for the good man who had been thus afflicted.

But the poor Prebendary at Rochester grew uneasy as to his “ducats,” and hurried to London to visit his strong box. He was told they were gone. With some difficulty he got admission to Strahan at his private residence. This gentleman, in a plausible fashion, frankly told him all that had happened—that they had been obliged to use his bonds—and assured him that he was doing himself great injury by taking any harsh or violent measures; for the Prebendary had

applied for a warrant for the arrest of the defaulters. Strahan, in the same plausible strain, assured him that had he gone to the bank in a reasonable spirit he would have been met in the same way; for "directions had been given that notes of hand should be prepared for him. Time was all they wanted," &c. One is inclined to smile at these absurd pleas. But the height of farce was when the poor swindled Prebendary was told, "This is the first dishonest act of my life. *I never before defrauded any man of sixpence.*" A delightful speech, worthy of Tartuffe himself, and having a rich flavour of comedy. For the boast that he disdained to rob any man of "sixpence," addressed to a victim whom he had just defrauded of nigh 30,000*l.*, is exquisite from its true Pharisaical flavour. The Prebendary was not to be "got over," and the warrants were issued. There was some little difficulty or hesitation in securing the culprits. On Tuesday, June 19th, Strahan was arrested when visiting a friend at Bryanston Square. Bates was also secured; while the officers went down to Sir John's place at Reigate, where they found him. As it was very late they consented to let him remain the night, under careful guard. At breakfast in the morning they conversed together on the case, when Sir John feelingly remarked that Strahan was to be pitied. "A year or so ago he was worth 180,000*l.*, now he was not worth so many pence. He had nine children,

and a beautiful residence at Dorking"—all which was very sad indeed.

But on their setting out for London some curious incidents occurred. Beguiled, no doubt, by their host's feeling reflections on the instability of human things, time so glided away, that they barely "caught the train." As the officers were getting tickets it began to move, when in an easy, natural way, Sir John stepped quickly in. The officers attempted to follow, but—such was the value of a gentleman's character in a rural district!—were pulled back by the porter, who positively refused to let them enter. They threatened him at his peril to stop them, but he said the orders of the Company were positive, and quoted the old familiar rule: "*none shall enter or leave a carriage when the train was in motion.*" This frustrating the officers of the Law, *by Law*, was another pleasant touch of comedy, and the mortified officers had to see their prey carried away from them to London. They rushed to the station-master to signal to stop the train. Not he—nothing of the kind. It was against the rules! He agreed, however, to send a telegraph message, requiring the officials at London Bridge to stop the fugitive.

Another train came up presently, and the unlucky officers got in, to arrive in town only a few minutes after the other. But there was no Sir John in custody. The official there did not know him by sight.

How were they to stop him? It must have been an anxious moment for Sir John as he tendered his ticket, but he walked away quickly, and was lost in the crowd. It seems he went to Peele's coffee-house, where the officers, who had soon got on his track, were able to follow him. They arrived only a few minutes after he had gone. However, on that night, about eight o'clock, the banker walked into Bow Street Police-Office, and gave himself up. It was thought that he might have escaped, but the chances were too much against him, and his friends counselled him to surrender. He said: "My name is Sir John Dean Paul, and I have come to give myself up." He then explained how he was carried off by the train, but gave no reason why he did not wait for his captors at London Bridge.

The three bankers duly appeared at Bow Street, and were committed for trial. Heavy bail was required, and found for two to the amount of 10,000*l.* each. Their trial did not come on until October 26th, a long interval, during which they must have suffered agonies of protracted suspense. Defence was, of course, hopeless, but the three culprits never anticipated the severe sentence which the judge passed on them—fourteen years' penal servitude! The shock was noted in their faces. But every one thought it was richly merited. A striking incident followed. The defrauded and plundered Prebendary was seen to weep bitterly as he heard the sentence!



The bankers were conveyed to their prison to endure their punishment. Time went by imperceptibly. The term, shortened according to the rule, was exhausted, and in due course the "good" banker was again seen flitting about London, and no doubt found worthy people to believe in him again.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE WATERLOO BRIDGE MYSTERY.

THE strange eventful panorama of adventure and crime which we have been witnessing, would be incomplete without the regular undiscovered "mystery." Nothing is so satisfactory and gratifying to the public as a genuine protracted mystery. Encouraged by hopes of discovery, or completely baffled for the time; police officers, newspaper men, and ingenious speculators, all work together, and pursue the common track. Every one, during the process, is entertained, and excited. But these incidents are rare. It seems incredible now, how much these feelings were roused by the trivial matter now about to be recorded, and which for many weeks absorbed general attention. This was the celebrated WATERLOO BRIDGE MYSTERY.

On the 9th of October, 1857, a great sensation was created throughout the country in consequence of the finding of a carpet-bag upon one of the stone ledges of one of the abutments of Waterloo Bridge.

The discovery was made about half-past five in the morning, by a youth, named James Barber, who, in company with another man, was rowing up the

Thames. At first sight they imagined that the bag contained the proceeds of some great robbery that had been committed, and that it probably held a prize, but on opening, to their great horror, they discovered that it contained portions of the mutilated remains of a person evidently murdered, and deposited therein, together with a portion of wearing apparel, saturated with gore.

The men at once conveyed the remains to the Adelphi Arches, where they called the police, who took them to Bow Street Police-Station. The inspector immediately ordered a minute examination to be made, and an inquiry instituted.

General horror was excited and speculations were rampant. An inquest was held, when one of the men in the boat, a youth named Barber, reported how he had found the bag. He had noticed that there was a cord fastened to it, and a portion of the end of the cord was in the water. The bag was lying on the third abutment of Waterloo Bridge, and was lying on its side. This was about six o'clock on Friday morning. He and the man who was with him in the boat, got hold of the cord and dragged it into the boat. As soon as they got it in they broke the bag open by bursting the lock, and emptied its contents into the barge. When they saw that there was nothing but a lot of bones and flesh and clothes, they gathered them up again and put them into the bag.

A surgeon deposed that he had examined the contents of the bag. "It contained a quantity of bones and clothes, the same which the jury have seen. I fitted the bones together, and found that they must all have belonged to the same person. They formed a complete skeleton, with the exception of the cervical, seven of the dorsal vertebræ, some portions of the ribs, with the hands and feet, and a portion of the lower third of the lesser fibula, or some small bone of the leg. All the principal bones were sawn into two or more portions, and all of them had pieces of muscle or tendon attached to them, as if they had been cut off in a haggling manner. On four places only was the skin left adhering to the bone—a piece of considerable size being on the back of each wrist, and on the right tubercle of the left tibia. Those portions of the skin left were partly covered thinly with short, black hair, showing that the individual had been a vigorous adult. Between the third and fourth ribs was a cut in the flesh of rather smaller size than the cuts in the shirt and under flannel waistcoat. The reason of wounds in the flesh being smaller is because when the instrument is withdrawn flesh contracts again directly."

Asked whether he could state positively whether those injuries were inflicted during life, he said :—

"I can. Around the stab a good deal of blood was extravasated into the tissue, showing that the injury

must have been inflicted during the life of the individual. That would not be the case unless the person was alive. The second and third ribs immediately under that I have mentioned, being missing, accounts for no other marks to correspond with the others on the shirt being found. The bones were clean sawn, except in one or two places, where great roughness seems to have been used. The saw must have been a fine one, and from some of the false cuts that have been made in some places, I should imagine it was a very narrow one. Several bones of the upper half of the back-bone are missing. I found the bones of such large make, that, taking the fact in connection with the portion of skin with short dark hair upon it, I should say it was a male. I have measured the bones of the deceased with those of my own, and I think that at least he must have been five feet eight inches in height. There were some dark hairs from whiskers. I think that the body was not cut to pieces till the rigidity of death had set in some time, because in fitting together the portions of the right leg I found the right knee-joint and hip-joint firmly fixed, so that the thigh must have stiffened at right angles with the rest of the body. The right arm had also stiffened with the forearm under, and pointing towards the body."

Asked, was he satisfied that the wound he saw in the chest was given during lifetime?

"I am certain of it, as the blood has infiltrated the

tissues extensively; I should not be surprised from the appearance of the remains if it was found that they had been boiled, or partially boiled. I imagine that that may have been the case from the rigidity of the tendons. I have not the least doubt that the body was never used for anatomical examinations. It is not possible that such could have been the case. A medical man must have wanted a body either for the muscles, nerves, arteries, or bones. The muscles, nerves, and arteries I can most positively assert have not been dissected, and the bones have been destroyed."

The toll-keeper of Waterloo Bridge, who used to see a good deal of dramatic life in the course of his business, next came on the scene. He was on duty at half-past eleven. "I remember seeing a person dressed as a woman come up from the Strand side. She was alone, at least I did not notice any one with her. She had a carpet-bag with her. The carpet-bag now produced I believe to be the same. She laid a halfpenny on the iron plate, and took the bag with her longways. In trying to get it through with her she turned the stile twice. I said to her, 'Why did you not ask for some one to help to lift your bag up for you? see what you have done, you have caused me, by turning the stile twice, to lose a halfpenny toll.' She said something in reply in a gruff tone of voice, and I stooped down and took the bag by the

handles, and put my hand under the bottom, and so lifted it up on to the iron plate of the stile. I am certain from that that it had leathern handles, with bottom and sides. I particularly noticed the bag, as there was a strong gas-light from the lamp, and on the side I noticed that there was a bright flower in the pattern. On the bag now produced is a flower which I believe to be the same that I noticed. I am not certain that I should know the woman again, but I think I should if I saw her. Her hair seemed as though it had been thickly powdered and plastered down on to her forehead. I particularly remarked that she seemed agitated, as if she was in a hurry, and I thought she was hurrying to go by the train from Waterloo, which starts at 11.45. She spoke rather gruffly, it was certainly in a masculine tone of voice. Her height might have been about 5 ft. 3 in. She was a short woman and rather stout. I have no recollection of ever seeing her come off the bridge again."

It seems astonishing that men in such a position, with thousands passing by, should be able to retain a distinct idea of any individual or their behaviour; but experience shows that railway porters and others, in the habit of dealing with vast passing crowds, gradually acquire a sort of professional instinct, and unconsciously note and retain any peculiarity that differs from the uniform course.

Later a "general dealer," called Ball, recollected that he had passed over the bridge close upon midnight, and this is what he saw: "I live at 10, Grove Place, Waterloo Road, and am a general dealer. On Thursday night, the 8th of October, I was going along Waterloo Bridge, from the Strand side, between eleven and twelve o'clock. As soon as I had passed the turnstile I turned back to beg a light of Evrington. When I got there, I saw a short party dressed in female attire, and about 5 ft. 3 in. in height, passing through the turnstile. I heard Evrington say to her, 'If you can't lift the bag yourself, why can't you ask some one else?' I then saw Evrington lift the bag over. It was a carpet-bag, but I did not notice the colour of it, or whether it had leather sides. The person in question also had a parcel. When Evrington handed the bag over to her, she took it from him, and I then caught sight of her full face. She had a sallow complexion, with rather sunken eyes, and a mark on the left cheek, near the nose, which I took to be a mole. The hair was a kind of white, but it did not look a natural colour. I saw her features distinctly, but did not take any notice of her dress. She proceeded along the bridge about half way, and then I overtook her, and passed her. After I had passed her, I saw a rather tallish man on the opposite side of the bridge, and near the Surrey end of it, walking easily towards the Strand. He was about the first recess on



the Surrey side. I did not take any particular notice of him, and could not identify him if I saw him."

Dr. Alfred Taylor, a well-known authority on what is called "medical jurisprudence," went minutely into the whole case, and his report is most interesting, as showing the wonderful fashion in which science can work, even when supplied with slender materials. It suggests Professor Owen's power of reconstructing a whole animal from a single bone or joint. After stating that it was clear that the remains were those of a man, he thus ingeniously argues from the position of the remains.

"The left arm was fixed in such a direction as to be widely separated from the left side of body, instead of lying parallel to it, and on this side the forearm was firmly bent on the arm at an angle of 45 deg. On the right side, viewing the direction of the bones, as fixed by the portions left in the joints, the forearm was bent on the upper arm at an angle of 80 deg. On examining the joints it was found there was no ossification or other disease to account for this firmly-fixed condition of the upper or lower limbs on the right side, and the upper limbs on the left side.

"So I infer from this examination that the limbs had not been relaxed since they had undergone the rigidity of death, that the body had been cut and sawn while in this rigid state; and that the mode in which it was subsequently treated, tended to preserve

the fixed condition of the joints, as a result of cadaveric rigidity in a constrained posture.

“ The cutting and sawing of these remains took place after death. The cutting has been effected roughly with a knife, while the sawing has been performed in the shafts with a fine saw.

“ In one portion of the left side of the chest, comprising the second, third, and fourth ribs, with one half of the chest bone attached, there is an aperture in the flesh presenting the appearance of a stab. It is situated in front, between the third and fourth rib near their junction with the chest bone.

“ Assuming that this wound has been inflicted during life, it would have penetrated the heart and produced rapid if not immediate death. The muscles of the chest through which this stab had passed were for some space around of a dark red colour, evidently produced by blood which had been effused as the result of this wound.

“ This appearance is unlike that produced by a cut or a stab in a cold dead body in which circulation has ceased. The edges of the wound are averted, and this fact, together with the infiltration of the muscles with blood, which even *the soaking in liquid for a week had not removed*, lead me to the conclusion that this wound was inflicted on the deceased either during life or within a few minutes of death—i.e., while the body was warm, and the blood was liquid.

“The joints had been sawn through, evidently with great trouble, at points where a scalpel, even in the hands of a young anatomist, would have speedily effected a separation of limbs. The acromion process of the right scapular, or bladebone, had been sawn through in order to remove the shoulder.

“In short, the clearest examination, coupled with the knowledge derived from a period of seven years spent in the study of anatomy by dissections, lead me to the conclusion that these remains have not been employed for any anatomical purposes whatever, and that they have been boiled in water.

“This would carry the probable time of death to the last week in September or to the first week in October. The period may have been shorter than this—that is, that death may have taken place more recently; but considering that the weather during that time was mild, humid, and favourable to putrefaction, I do not think it was longer.”

“Had death occurred at a more remote period I should have expected to find some visible changes indicative of putrefaction in the interior of the right hipjoint, and on the deep-seated portions of flesh around the joint.”

#### *Conclusions.*

“The conclusions which I draw from this examination are:—

1. “That the remains are those of a person of the

male sex, of adult age, and in stature of at least five feet nine inches."

2. "That they present no physiological or pathological peculiarities; also that the limbs had not been relaxed since they had undergone the rigidity of death; that the body had been cut and sawn while in this rigid state, and that the mode in which it was subsequently treated tended to preserve the fixed condition of the joints, as the result of cadaveric rigidity in a constrained posture.

3. "That the cuttings and sawings of the remains took place after death, and that the cutting was roughly done with a knife, while the sawing has been roughly performed in the shafts with a fine saw; that in all probability the deceased died from the stab in the chest, which penetrated the heart.

4. "That the body has not been used for dissection for the purposes of anatomy, but that on the contrary, from the period at which the rigidity of death took place, the remains have been rendered perfectly useless for any purpose whatever; that all those parts which are useful to anatomists have been destroyed by a person or persons quite ignorant of the anatomical relation of parts. They have been cut and sawn before the rigidity of death had ceased—i.e., in from eighteen or twenty-four hours after death, and in this state have been partially boiled and subsequently salted. The body of the deceased has not been laid out or attended to like that of a person dying from

natural causes, and which body might be lawfully used for anatomical purposes.

5. "That the person of whose body these remains are a part may have been dead for a period of three weeks prior to the date on which they were examined by me—namely, the 21st of October.

"The examination of the articles of clothing leads me to the conclusion that the body of the person who wore them must have been subjected to great violence. The stab, penetrating from behind the double collar of the over-coat, must have been inflicted with great force, as it extends from the collar to the under-coat and waistcoat.

"The clothes, however, have been exposed and washed since they were stained with blood, and this creates a difficulty in forming an opinion. But the cutting and tearing of the right sleeves of the over-coat, under-coat, and shirt are consistent with the assumption that the body had become rigid after death in a disordered position, and that the clothes were torn from it. This position is indicated in the remains, especially on the right side, by the fixed or bent condition of the hip and elbow-joints."

Nothing, however, was ever discovered, and it remains a mystery to this hour. In spite of this deliberate opinion of the experts, the "Wise Men" hold that it was a practical joke of some medical students, which seems likely enough:

The toll-keeper of Waterloo Bridge, standing by his

little hutch, night and day, witnessed, as I said, many curious and half-dramatic scenes. Twenty years ago a regular stereotyped heading in the papers was "Suicide from Waterloo bridge," and it will be recollected how constantly recurred some sad tragedy of some young woman flinging herself from the centre parapet. It is curious to find that, since the tolls have been abolished, this mode of suicide, which was as much in favour as casting oneself from the Duke of York's Monument—has fallen out of fashion.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Dickens, in one of his pleasant journeys through London, did not forget the Waterloo Bridge toll-keeper and the dramatic opportunities of his situation. One night, escorted by his favorite police, he paid him a visit.

Our author ensconced himself in the toll-house and had a long and interesting talk with the toll-man on all the incidents he observed in his professional life. First, on the "suicides," which now appear to have "gone out" with the tolls.

" 'This is where it is,' said Waterloo. 'If people jump off straight forwards from the middle of the

<sup>1</sup> It was at last found necessary to enclose the gallery of that monument with a hideous cage, which really destroyed the whole symmetry of the upper portion. The present writer may take credit for the disappearance of this eyesore, having suggested to Mr. Plunket, the present Chief Commissioner of Works, that as no one now ascended to see the view, or for other purposes, it might be restored with safety to its original state. This was promptly done.

parapet of the bays of the bridge, they are seldom killed by drowning, but are smashed, poor things; that's what they are; they dash themselves upon the buttress of the bridge. But, you jump off,' said Waterloo to me, putting his forefinger in a button-hole of my great-coat; 'you jump off from the side of the bay, and you'll tumble true into the stream under the arch. What you have got to do is to mind how you jump in! There was poor Tom Steele from Dublin. Didn't dive! Bless you didn't dive at all! Fell down so flat into the water, that he broke his breast-bone, and lived two days!'

"I asked Waterloo if there were a favourite side of his bridge for this dreadful purpose. He reflected, and thought,—yes there was; he should say the Surrey side.

"He considered it astonishing how quick people were! Why, there was a cab came up one boxing-night, with a young woman in it, who looked, according to Waterloo's opinion of her, a little the worse for liquor; very handsome she was too—very handsome. She stopped the cab at the gate, and said she'd pay the cabman then: which she did, though there was a little hankering about the fare, because at first she didn't seem quite to know where she wanted to be drove to. However, she paid the man, and the toll too, and looking Waterloo in the face (he thought she knew him, don't you see!) said, 'I'll finish it somehow!' Well, the cab went off, leaving Waterloo a

little doubtful in his mind, and while it was going on at full speed the young woman jumped out, never fell, hardly staggered, ran along the bridge pavement a little way, passing several people, and jumped over from the second opening.' At the inquest it was giv' in evidence that she had been quarrelling at the 'Hero of Waterloo,' and it was brought in jealousy. (One of the results of Waterloo's experience was, that there was a deal of jealousy about.) 'Sometimes people haven't got a halfpenny. If they are really tired and poor we give 'em one and let 'em through. Other people will leave things—pocket-handkerchiefs mostly. I have taken cravats and gloves, pocket-knives, tooth-picks, studs, shirt-pins, rings (generally from young gents, early in the morning), but handkerchiefs is the general thing.'

“ ‘Regular customers?’ said Waterloo. ‘Lord, yes! We have regular customers. One, such a worn-out used-up old file as you can scarcely picter, comes from the Surrey side as regular as ten o’clock at night comes; and goes over, *I* think, to some flash house on the Middlesex side. He comes back, he does, as reg’lar as the clock strikes three in the morning, and then can hardly drag one of his old legs after the other. He always turns down the water-stairs, comes up again, and then goes on down the Waterloo road. He always does the same thing, and never varies a minute. Does it every night—even Sundays.’ ”



## CHAPTER XIV.

DR. BERNARD.

MANY will recall the sudden shock which the news of Orsini's diabolical attempt to assassinate the French ruler at the Opera House, gave to all who were looking on at the theatrical and rather tawdry glories of the Second Empire. In mediæval chronicles we read of the reckless poisonings, conspiracies, &c., which impart such a dramatic colour to history, with a sort of wondering curiosity, as though they belonged to barbaric times, and were now finally swept away. Yet our generation has witnessed elaborately planned conspiracies that exceed anything conceived in the darkest and most violent eras—explosions, destruction of the innocent to secure that of the obnoxious—burnings, stabbings, poisonings, on a scale that throws previous attempts in the shade. But nothing has ever exceeded the Orsini attempt, or the Clerkenwell atrocity in this country.

On the night of January 14th, 1858, it was known that the Emperor would visit the Opera House, the old, somewhat dilapidated institution in the Rue Le

Pelletier. This opportunity was seized on by a gang of Italians, who had arrived specially for the purpose, to arrange a plot for his destruction. As it proved, he had the narrowest of narrow escapes. Orsini, Gomez, Rudio, and Pierri repaired to the place, each provided with a bomb, about the size of a soda-water bottle, and charged with an explosive substance. Each of these grenades, which were of iron, had a number of projectory nipples, so contrived, that on whatever side they fell, an explosion was sure to take place. On the morning fixed the four assassins had held a council in the Rue Montmartre, and at half-past six finally met at Orsini's lodgings in the Rue Monthabor.

The Emperor and his party were expected to arrive in State between eight and nine o'clock, and a crowd of some hundreds gathered to see him. Owing to certain suspicious circumstances, a police-officer was attracted to Pierri, who was found hovering about the private entrance to the Emperor's box, and arrested him. Being searched at the station one of these alarming bombs, charged with fulminating mercury, was found upon him, with a revolver and a dagger.

But now the Imperial carriages arrived in all show and state, and of a sudden a terrible explosion followed. Three of the bombs had been thrown at or under the carriage. One of the horses was instantly blown to pieces, and over 500 wounds were inflicted

on the helpless crowd, whose shrieks of horror and suffering filled the air.<sup>1</sup> Orsini himself was struck by a fragment, and, by a strange fatality, was tracked by the blood which streamed from his wound. The others were speedily arrested at their lodgings, and on Rudio 260*l.* was found in gold.

It was natural that this horrible attempt, with its attendant display of indifference as to the lives of innocent persons, should have roused universal indignation. The consequences, however, had nearly been somewhat serious for this country, for it came out in the investigation that the whole had been plotted in London by a number of Italians and Frenchmen, who went backwards and forwards to Paris to lay their plans, always returning for shelter to their lair in London. The bitter and angry feeling was excited in France. The "French colonels" vapoured loudly, offering the Emperor to go and seek the conspirators in their dens. As is well known, Lord Palmerston showed a complaisance in meeting the complaints and menacing pressure of the French ministers, that seemed strongly inconsistent with his old and much vaunted *Civis Romanus* declaration.

A Dr. Bernard, a native of France, who had been

<sup>1</sup> The escape of the Emperor and Empress was a narrow one. His hat was perforated by some projectile, the aide-de-camp who sat beside him was wounded in the neck, and two footmen were seriously hurt.

a surgeon in the navy, had been driven from his native country, and had found shelter in England, where he had been living for some five years. There he had become intimate with many refugee Italians, among whom were the conspirators who had taken part in the attempt, namely, Orsini, Pierri, Gomez, and Rudio, with an Englishman named Allsop, who had escaped. The Englishman, in October, 1857, had gone to Birmingham, and employed one Taylor there to manufacture six "instruments," as his counsel called them, but which were, in fact, hand grenades. Bernard was living in Park Street, Bayswater, Orsini in Kentish Town. Shortly after the bombs were made, Bernard was found to have ordered a quantity of nitric acid and alcohol, which it seems are used to manufacture explosive substances, such as "fulminate of mercury," and the bombs might now be assumed to be complete, and furnished for their deadly purpose. Next Orsini was found to have visited Brussels. Bernard visited a Swiss cafe-keeper, and employed him to bring over the "machines" to Orsini, he himself following shortly afterwards. When Orsini set out for Paris, he brought a letter from Bernard, introducing him, under the assumed name of Allsop, to a gun-maker. Pierri later appeared at Brussels, and, on presenting a letter from Bernard, he received from the cafe-keeper a portion of one of the machines. Orsini was furnished with a

large sum of money—435*l.*—which he exchanged for notes at the Bank of England, and one of the notes for 20*l.* Bernard was found to have changed at a money-office. With this cash Bernard went to the house of Rudio, another of the conspirators, who was in a state of destitution, and who immediately afterwards repaired to Paris, furnished with a false passport, procured for him by Bernard. These were awkward facts, and seemed to prove, in the strongest way, the prisoner's complicity in the conspiracy.

Mr. Edwin James, a great legal personality of the day, was Bernard's counsel, and found it an easy task to contrive a defence. It was ready to his hand in the excited state of public feeling, and the text was a plausible one. What, England, that has always sheltered the oppressed, was she now to be the minion of the despotic Governments?

Was she now to yield up the poor persecuted refugee to the threats of the foreigners? The prosecution could never have been sustained but for pressure from without. "His friend the Attorney-General had omitted to explain how it was that now, for the first time in the annals of English jurisprudence, this case had been brought before a jury. His friend had not explained how it was that at the bidding of those who were not content with the blood of Pierri and Orsini, they were asked to stain an English scaffold with the blood of the prisoner." At Bow Street they

had begun by trying to make out the charge of conspiracy, but that had failed them. The act they found too weak for the purpose, so they tried to mend their hand by the odious Conspiracy Bill. When this also failed them they had to fall back on the charge of murder, which he contended had not been made out. He then passed to the facts, and maintained it was essential to prove that the grenades handed to Orsini were those which had passed through Dr. Bernard's hands. He admitted that Bernard was joined with Orsini in an insurrectionary movement; but denied that it had been shown that he was concerned in this particular conspiracy.

He alluded next to what seemed always a strong point, viz., the letter of Walter S. Landor, who had offered a substantial sum to any man who would rid the country of the tyrant. There was a sort of toleration extended to this tempestuous, erratic being, as though he were not quite responsible, or that his words did not bear any serious meaning. An awkward bit of evidence was the finding of a letter of Allsop's in Bernard's possession. "If I were in California now, I would at once offer double the amount offered by Landor, to the man who would rid the world of that most wretched caitiff. *He must be killed*, and with him the systems, which he seems necessary to keep up." That such a letter should have been addressed to Bernard by one of the admitted conspirators was

certainly strong presumption of guilt. Mr. James, however, disposed of it in an airy fashion, saying that all public men must have letters as extraordinary addressed to them, the mere receipt of which should not compromise them. But his real defence was the rather "clap-trap" one of "Old England" being not merely the home of the free, but the shelter of the oppressed, and Old England would never allow herself to be made the tool and executive of the oppressor! The jury took this view, and amid shouts of applause, which Dr. Bernard led, waving his hat over his head, the prisoner was acquitted. In the midst of these transports he was astonished to find himself placed at the Bar on a fresh charge, and there was something almost ludicrous in his air of discomfiture; but this was merely a formality for disposing of the other accusations which the Crown did not mean to urge.

## CHAPTER XV.

### GOVERNOR EYRE.

TOWARDS the end of the year 1865 there had been a sort of outbreak of the negroes in Jamaica, who, inflamed by Baptist ministers and others, rose and committed some acts of violence. A small body of about a score of volunteers, having resisted them was cut to pieces, and the custos of Morant Bay was murdered. The governor of the island, Mr. Eyre, took energetic measures to put down the insurrection, and promptly arrested a minister named Gordon, who was believed to be the chief instigator of the insurrection. He was tried by court-martial and executed. Great excitement was caused in England by this high proceeding, which had the effect of crushing the disorder. It was urged that Gordon was innocent and had been arrested at Kingston where martial law had not been proclaimed. This feeling of sympathy was gradually worked up into a sort of fanatical passion. Every one took sides, society was divided, religious feelings and passions were roused. The ministers found themselves obliged to suspend the governor, and send out



a commission to inquire into the case. Meanwhile private persons and societies set on foot what seemed a persecution of the luckless governor. Indictments were laid against subordinates, which, however, grand juries and judges rejected.

Nearly three years afterwards, and two days after the presumed Clerkenwell conspirators were committed for trial, Sir Thomas Henry was disturbed by the appearance of Sir Robert Collier before him, instructed to make an application "on behalf of Mr. John Stuart Mill and Mr. P. A. Taylor, of the Jamaica Committee," that a warrant should be granted to arrest Mr. John Eyre, for the murder of Gordon. He named the several Acts of Parliament, declared that a "great crime" was believed to have been committed, and called on the magistrate to comply with his application. The magistrate declared that the highest authority in the country had laid down the law to a grand jury who had thrown out the bill. During the twenty-eight years he had held his office he had never heard of a magistrate granting a warrant on a charge which a grand jury had declared to be unfounded. Holding this view he declined to grant one.

Nothing daunted, the committee set to work and brought their case to the court of Queen's Bench, where on May 8th they obtained an order directing Mr. Vaughan, the Bow Street magistrate, to hear the case and commit him for trial if necessary. Accord-

ingly on the 20th there was another field-day at the office, and Mr. Vaughan was induced to commit the governor for trial. The unfortunate man gave vent to his feelings, declaring that now for two years and a half he had been the victim of a ceaseless, rancorous persecution, and added this prophecy "he was convinced that those who had combined against him would not influence or be accepted by the higher tribunal to whom he now appealed."

The "persecution," however, went on for some time longer, in spite of the vehement advocacy of Carlyle and others; but gradually, public opinion seemed to come round to his side; and in 1872, the Government felt itself justified in defraying the expenses he had been put to, and which were said to have amounted to nearly 10,000*l.*

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE BARON DE VIDIL.

IN the month of June, 1861, a considerable sensation was caused by the news of an attempt by a French baron, who was well known about St. James's, to murder his own son. The incidents of this attempt were truly extraordinary, dramatic, and unaccountable. The name of the assailant was Baron de Vidil, who belonged to good clubs, and was known as a warm adherent of the Orleans family.

The country between Teddington and Twickenham was in 1861 much more open and secluded than it is now, nor had the so-called "Jerry Builder" as yet invaded the district. On the evening of the 28th of June, a little after seven o'clock, a woman and a man who were walking down one of the lanes close to Orleans House, were startled by a young man, a Frenchman he seemed, running towards them in a sort of panic. His face was bloody, and when he reached them, he flung himself to the ground, "crouching down between them," so it was described, exclaiming, "O, mother, protect me!" Next a rider-

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less horse made its appearance—thus there were two—which was closely followed by another apparition. An older gentleman rode up, and with real or affected astonishment asked, “What was the matter,” adding that the young man’s horse had shied and flung him against the wall of the lane. Having made this statement, he rushed through the hedge, being much torn by some tenter-hooks, and disappeared. The young man was carried to the “Swan” Inn, and a surgeon was sent for, Mr. Clark, who found two severe wounds, one in the forehead, as from a blow, while at the back of his head there was another. The elder gentleman who had followed, was now recognized as the Baron de Vidil, for he was well known at Orleans House, and to the doctor he repeated the story of his son having been thrown against the wall. Mr. Clark had been struck by the terror shown by the son at every movement of the father and at the idea of being left alone with him. His suspicions were aroused by the two wounds, which were not consistent with the story. The son presently contrived to whisper to the doctor that he must get his father away, and an assistant was then placed in charge of him. In the morning the party went up to London, when the young man was taken to his uncle, to whom he revealed the fact that his father had made a murderous attack upon him in the lane. It was thought

right that a warrant should be asked for at Bow Street, and the painful spectacle was to follow of a father being arrested at the instance of his son.

It appeared that this Baron de Vidil was the son of a wealthy glove-maker, who had been ennobled by Louis Philippe. The son had come to England, where he had married a lady worth 30,000*l.*, on which he had withdrawn from business. He had become an *attaché* at the French Embassy, and became well known in society. His manners were pleasant, and he was now about fifty-five. The wife was dead, and there was only this son, Alfred, who was to inherit his mother's fortune, after his father's lifetime, which in case of the son's dying without "appointing," as it was called, or making a will, became the father's absolutely. This had an awkward air. The father, Baron de Vidil, did not appear to answer to the charge, and, it was found, had fled to France. An application for his extradition was made to the French Government, but it was believed that, through some looseness in the clauses, the treaty did not apply to his case. Acting, however, on advice, the Baron thought it better to return, and arrived in London, accompanied by two of the French police.

When he appeared at Bow Street an extraordinary scene took place. The young man when he entered the witness-box refused to testify against his father, in spite of much pressure and admonition from the

magistrate, and the case was adjourned to give time for reflection. When the case was resumed another curious scene took place.

Mr. Pollock stated that in consequence of the continued refusal of the young man to give evidence, he was instructed to retire from the prosecution, and to leave the matter entirely in Mr. Corrie's hands. Mr. Sleigh, amid some expressions of disapprobation, suggested that "the ends of justice would be entirely answered by the defendant being called upon to enter into sureties to keep the peace towards his son, M. de Vidil." The young man was then put into the witness-box, and, in answer to the magistrate, expressed his determination not to give evidence. The magistrate addressing him in a kindly manner, said, "Since you were here the other day you have had an opportunity of reflecting upon what I said to you, and also conferring with your friends and legal advisers. Am I to understand that you still refuse to give your evidence, fully and truthfully, in this case?"

"Yes, sir," replied he, "I do refuse."

Mr. Corrie then stated his intention to adjourn the case until the following Monday, so that the Government might consider the question of the expediency, or otherwise, of prosecuting the Baron on their own responsibility. He intimated that he should express an opinion to the Secretary of State favourable to his interference in the matter. However, next day an intimation was forwarded by Government to the

magistrates of Bow Street to the effect that the case of Baron de Vidil must be dealt with in the ordinary way, and that it was not their intention to put themselves forward as prosecutors.

On Monday the Baron was finally examined and committed for trial. The son was in attendance, and sat opposite the witness-box. The prisoner, as before, kept his face covered by his hands throughout the inquiry.

There was nothing new in the evidence as to the committal of the assault. Mr. Parker, an uncle of M. de Vidil, produced a letter written to him by the Baron on the day after the assault. In this letter he said :—" I am very anxious this morning about Alfred, who has left his lodgings at 40, Duke Street, without letting me know where he has gone. I am the more anxious that he met yesterday with an accident in riding, the horse having hit him on the forehead in rearing. I sat with him till twelve last night, and told him I would call early in the morning. I beg you will be so kind as to inform me whether you have heard from Alfred. With best regards to Mrs. Parker and children, believe me, &c.

The prisoner's son was then sworn. He said, " My name is Alfred John de Vidil. I am the son of the prisoner. I still decline to give any evidence against my father." Mr. Corrie asked, " You persist in that resolution?" To which witness replied, " Yes, I do," and then sat down.

Mr. Sleigh addressed the magistrate for the prisoner, saying, "If you are resolved to commit the prisoner for trial I shall not waste the time of the Court by addressing you, but shall prefer to reserve our defence. I hope I may take it for granted, however, that you will admit the prisoner to good substantial bail. Happily, in this country, every man is held innocent until a conviction is recorded against him, and as there can be no other object here than to ensure the attendance of the prisoner, I trust you will now consider that we are entitled to this concession. You have heard from the officers that the Baron came to England of his own free will to meet this charge. There was no power in the world to compel his production here, for the treaty did not meet his case; and yet he requested that he might be brought to London in order that the inquiry might be fully gone into."

Mr. Corrie said he must pursue the course usually taken in cases of this description, according to the rule laid down by the judges. "We must consider the nature of the punishment to which the prisoner is liable in the event of his being convicted of the crime of which he stands accused, and then ask the question, 'Is he likely to forfeit any sum of money rather than expose himself to the risk of such punishment?' Looking at the question in this point of view, I think it is my duty to decline accepting bail.



I feel the less hesitation in coming to this decision because there is an immediate appeal from my judgment if you like to avail yourself of it. There is a judge in town to whom you can apply, and who can reverse my decision within twenty-four hours, if he is disposed to entertain your application."

The prisoner was then committed to Newgate for trial. Application for the release of the baron on bail was made to the Lord Chief Justice: it was refused.

In due course a regular prosecution followed. It was felt that, in the default of the most important witness, there was no chance, not of a conviction merely, but of even going through the ordinary forms of a trial. But by a strange chance, a labouring man, who, since the assault, had been lying seriously ill, was heard of—who, it was rumoured, had been close to the lane and had witnessed the whole incident. When he was restored to health, he came forward, and deposed to what he had seen, completely confirming the young man's story of a murderous assault. The Baron de Vidil was accordingly convicted, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment with hard labour. The young man still refused to depose against his father. He made a mysterious announcement, however, which caused some speculation. He declared that his father had threatened to make some serious charge, and that if this was persisted in, his lips would

be unsealed, and that he would reveal all. Nothing, however, resulted in either direction. Still refusing to give his testimony, the law proceeded to deal with him in its practical automatic way—without too much severity, yet at the same time firmly enforcing its practice. He too was sentenced to a term of imprisonment for “contempt of court.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### “THE FLOWERY LAND” PIRATES.

THIS case seems to recall the days of Captain Kidd, or the Buccaneers ; and as the eight swarthy, truculent-looking pirates stood ranged in the dock to stand their trial for murdering their English captain so lately as the year 1864, the spectators turned away with horror. Even the name of the craft, *The Flowery Land*, had a romantic sound, and was suited for a story-teller of the sea like Mr. Clark Russell.

On the 28th of July, 1863, *The Flowery Land* sailed from London for Singapore, with a general cargo of wine and other goods. The captain was one John Smith ; the first and second mates were Karswell and Taffir. There were two Chinamen, a Norwegian, and the rest were Spaniards, Italians, Greek. A few spoke English none understood, but it must have been on the whole a suspicious and dangerous miscellany for an English captain to go to sea with.

During the voyage the motley crew showed signs of indiscipline, and ropes' ends and confinement had to

be used freely. One Carlos was so bad that he was brought up and strapped to the bulwarks, but Captain Smith, who was good-natured and humane, seeing that he was ill, came himself and sent him below. They were always grumbling at the food and the duties they had to perform. Sometimes they quarrelled among themselves, as did the two men Blanco and Carlos, when the mates roughly separated them, giving Carlos a blow. Their ferocious spirits were all the while registering such affronts, and nursing their revenge. On the night of the 10th of September, the second mate had come down from his first watch at midnight, and was relieved by the first mate, and went to sleep. He was awoke at four o'clock in the morning by a noise of hammering on the deck. He jumped up and tried to ascend the steps, but was stopped by the prostrate figure of a man whom the others were beating about the head with handspikes or bars. A blow promptly sent him below. He called to the captain and receiving no answer, rushed to look for him, and found him lying in a pool of blood quite dead. The bloodthirsty wretches had mutinied, and were murdering their officers. Presently all the noise ceased—and the band, who consisted of Lyons, Blanco, Duramo, Santos, Carlos, Vartos, Narcolino, and Lopez, came into the cabin and gathered round the second mate. He asked, did they want to kill him. They said no, but he must navigate the vessel to Buenos

Ayres. He next saw them about to throw the captain's body overboard, but the faithful officer interposed, and begged to be allowed to sew it up decently in canvas, which was permitted. They next rummaged all the captain's boxes, dividing the money among themselves. The cargo was then rifled and champagne bottles were seen lying about the deck.

The ship being put under the direction of the second mate Taffir, he was regarded with much suspicion, as though he were likely to betray them, and when he spoke a strange vessel, there was a great noise among the Manilla men, who spoke in Spanish, fancying he had been telling tales. His life, indeed, was constantly in peril. Once he saw one of the ruffians stick a knife through the arm of the steward. At last, on October 2nd, after an awful period of suspense, they sighted land, when the boats were got out and filled with provisions and champagne. The steward was thrown overboard, and the ship scuttled. They had their story ready prepared—shipwrecked mariners, an American vessel which had foundered at sea, laden with guano for Bordeaux, and they had been in the boats five days and nights. The captain had got into another boat, but they had lost him. On landing the second mate told his story, and on inquiry five of the men were executed.

Another of these mutinies at sea, accompanied by

violence and murder, took place more recently, and once more recalls the piratical atrocities of the Buccaneers of the Spanish Main. This was the mutiny on Board the *Lennie*, the result of that extraordinary mixture of sailors of all nations in a single vessel.

The *Lennie* was a Canadian vessel, loading at Antwerp for New Orleans. The captain was a Canadian named Hatfield, the first mate an Irishman called Wortley, while MacDonald, an Englishman, was second mate, the steward, Von Hoydonck, was a German, and eleven hands, Greeks, Italians, &c., were engaged to fill up the motley crew. Among others there were Lettes, Renken, Cannesso, *alias* Green, Peter Petersohn, Angelos, otherwise Demetrius, or Andres, or Little George; Moros or little Johnny, Carcares, otherwise Kalair, or more familiarly "Joe the Cook;" Kaida or George Thomas, or "Lips;" Leosis, *alias* Lewis; Caludis, *alias* Meletos or "Big Harry." Such was the miscellany which the luckless captain had to control. A few of this extraordinary gathering spoke a sort of English, but it was difficult to get the orders understood,

The vessel sailed on October 23, but there soon arose difficulties between the captain and his men. "It was a teetotal ship," said the steward, "and we had no spirits at all on board. We had sixteen on board all told. My orders from the captain were to give the

men plenty of everything they wanted, and we went on very well for a few days. He was a very nice man, who seldom went on deck; he used to read by the cabin fire. For the seven days we were at sea, before four a.m. and ten p.m., every day was quiet, but I cannot answer for other times when I had turned in. On the morning of the 31st October I was in my berth about four a.m., and I was awoke by a noise on the poop. I then said to the second steward, who slept in the berth below me, ‘There is a row; turn out, and see what time it is.’ He went to the fore-cabin and looked at the time, and said to me, ‘It is twenty minutes past four.’ We then went together to make some coffee, and took six steps up to the deck, but the companion doors were shut, and the boy told me they would not let him up. I tried to get up then, but the prisoners Caludis and Leosis were standing there, and Caludis said the best thing I could do was to stop down below. They were standing against the door watching, so that no one should come out of the cabin. Before this I heard the order ‘ship about.’ The braces got foul. All hands would be wanted for putting the ship about. The captain said ‘This is always the case,’ referring to the braces—‘you are no sailors, you are a lot of soldiers.’ Then I heard the captain halloo, as if his throat was cut, he cried, ‘Oh, oh!’ I heard four or five kicks on the deck. He was killed right over the top of my head;

that was how I heard so well. The next I heard five shots fired, and all hands went forward after the reports. The shots were very shortly after one another. About twenty minutes after I heard a second rush on deck, all over the main deck as if they were after the second mate. Then, about 5.30 or 5.35 a.m., all hands came down into the cabin, the whole eleven of the prisoners. Before then I went to the captain's cabin through the skylight as soon as I heard the row, but found no one in it or the mate's cabin. I found in the captain's bunk two loaded revolvers. After the row I went to the pantry and put the revolvers amongst a lot of dry apples used for the men. Then I went to the skylight and tried to get out. Charley Renken was standing at the wheel, and sang out, 'There is the steward coming out of the skylight!' I put my head in then, and shut the skylight inside, and remained till all hands came down. George Green said, 'Well, steward, we have finished now!' I and another sailor, who was on deck, witnessed the details of this foul murder. The captain gave the order, 'About ship,' in English, and the ship was put about. The captain was swearing because they could not 'pull well' the braces. The captain said, using the foulest language, 'Pull those braces well,' in English. He said no more. Big Harry put his knife in the captain's stomach. He drew his knife out of its sheath, and stabbed the captain close to the cabin door; I was



within two feet of him at the time. Big Harry said something at the time in Greek. The captain was looking on the weather side. The captain when he was stabbed went right round the poop. French Peter on the other side of the poop stopped the captain and stabbed him with a knife in the front of the head. I could not see the knife; it was dark then. Then Big Harry caught hold of the captain and heaved him down on the deck; and pulled off his boots and cap, and threw them down on the deck. There was blood all over the deck and the captain. He was a long time alive; his face was covered with blood. I saw the second mate coming from the weather side of the house on the main deck crying, and put his hands on the boatswain's neck, and said, 'Boatswain, save my life.' The second mate before that went and tried to put the captain in the cabin, and then Big Harry put a knife through the second mate twice. After that he ran forward. I saw him coming from the weather side of the house when he spoke to the boatswain, and asked him to save his life. The boatswain shoved him away, and then Big Harry stabbed him again several times in the back of the neck. The second mate fell on the deck on the lee side, close to the fore-braces. They then pulled off his boots and cap, and braced the fore-yards sharp up. 'Lips' was at the wheel when the captain gave the order to put the ship about. 'Lips' then went on the fore-rigging. The first

mate had then gone to the middle of the fore-yard. 'Lips' had a revolver in his hand, and he fired at the chief mate from the middle of the fore-rigging. He fired four times. After each shot the mate said, 'Oh, oh!' I did not see if he was hit, but the prisoner aimed at the chief mate. The chief mate lowered himself down on to the deck by the four buntlines. Joe the Cook was standing close to him when he got down, and he stabbed the mate through, I should think he put the knife through him twenty times all over." *Joe the Cook here smiled and passed a remark to Nicholas, who stood next to him, as if it was rather an amusing reminiscence.* "The chief mate then fell down on the deck and I saw the blood all over French Peter and Big Harry, who had then come forward, and French Peter put his foot on the mate's stomach, and cut his head half off. Big Harry and the whole five were standing close." *The five implicated men here laughed and passed remarks.* "They then got ten fathoms of mooring-chain, made it fast round the mate's legs, and pitched him overboard. All his clothes were on except his cap, which some one took off. All five helped to heave the body and the chain overboard. The mooring-chain was got from the top of the anchor-chain. Joe the Cook then made fast the cat-block to the second mate's legs. All the five were together. The second mate was then dead. He was lifted up by the five together, and heaved overboard on the port side, at the waist, or middle of the ship.



**DANIEL GOOD ,**

*The supposed Murderer of Jane Jones*

From a sketch taken at Bow Street, Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup> 1842.



After the second mate was thrown overboard, we all went into the cabin."

After sailing for some days they began to grow suspicious of the steward, on whose superior knowledge they had to depend for the guidance of the ship. "On the 5th, we went out to sea again. Green said, 'You have nothing to do with the case, but you may choose to sell all my countrymen.' I said, 'No, I shall not sell your countrymen, but it is no use going to sea to carry all the sails away.' I said, 'I will go to sea again to please you, but you are no friend of mine, or you would stick to me as you are an officer in this ship.' He said, 'If I did, they would kill me.' We went out to sea for three days, and then Peter Petersohn, after we got clear of the land, took charge of the ship. When out of sight of land French Peter said, 'I will do the same with you as I have done with the others.' He spoke in French. I answered, 'I was prepared to die as much as he, that they might do as they liked with the ship, and I would do no more.' He said at first, 'You go down below, we don't want any more of you,' and then Petersohn took charge of the ship for two days. Then French Peter came to me in the cabin, and said, 'We want to see the land; what course are we to steer?' I said, 'Let the man who is in charge of the ship tell you; don't come and bother me,' then Big Harry came down and said, 'Steward, you take charge of the ship again; that

fellow can't navigate, I know.' I said, 'Yes, on condition you leave me alone, obey my orders and I will see you right.' All hands came down to the cabin, and I told them I would only take charge on condition that none of them interfered with me. Then Big Harry said, 'The first man who interferes with the steward in the navigation of the ship we will cut his ears off.' I took charge of the ship then, and took her into Isle de Re. It was then about eleven o'clock, blowing a gale from the westward, and I shortened sail, and took her back to Isle de Re the next day, and I said, 'We have been working hard for seven days, and have made no way yet, and the best thing is to let go the anchor.' I told the boatswain to get the anchor ready. We got in about 8.30. Big Harry asked me what place it was. I told him it was Cadiz, and they did not know better, and thought they would get to Gibraltar the next day, when a fair wind came. I told the boatswain to get fifteen fathoms of chain over the windlass. Before anchoring, French Peter, who saw it was not Cadiz, said, 'We won't stop here, we will go out to sea again.' But wind and current being too strong against us, Peter-son, who again took charge, and put about, could not beat out. Then French Peter said to me, 'See you put the anchor right, and as soon as we get a fair wind we go to sea.' I said, 'All right.' That was about half an hour before we anchored, between eight

and nine p.m. That night we threw two dozen bottles overboard, containing a message in French and English, for assistance. We anchored that night, and I let out sixty fathoms, though only in eight fathoms, to give them plenty of time and trouble to get the anchor up again. On the morning of the 8th, at four a.m., I hoisted a signal to show the ship was in distress, and it remained up till eight a.m., when Big Harry asked what it was up for. I told him it was to let the shore know we were windbound. He went forward and asked Renken and Petersohn if they knew the flags. They came out and looked at the flags, and turned and said that they were for the police. Then French Peter came and asked me what the flags were for, and I told him the same. He said, “Never mind windbound,” and he hauled the flags down, and was walking on the poop, and Joe the Cook came to me and said, ‘Steward, don’t fret.’ I said, ‘No, I won’t fret.’ He said, ‘We won’t do you nothing; we have done enough; we killed three, we don’t want to kill any more. They want to put away the boy, because they are afraid he will split on them when they get ashore, but I won’t agree to that, for I like him.’ I said, ‘The first man that comes aft to do anything to him, it will be life and life, for our life is as sweet as any of yours.’ He then went forward, and four men—Big Harry, French Peter, Joe, and Leosis—came and said, ‘Steward, now look out that

the boy when he comes ashore, don't say anything.' I said, 'Don't you trouble; I will look out for him.' French Peter pulled down the signal himself. On the 8th, in the morning all hands went forward, and they unshackled the chain at seventy-five fathoms, to slip if a fair wind came, without getting the anchor. A pilot-boat then spoke us on the 8th. French Peter told me to go below before the boat got alongside. When the pilot came alongside at Isle de Re I was ordered down below by French Peter. I was down half an hour. French Peter told the pilot that they were waiting for a wind, and that their chronometers had run down. The pilot was alongside twenty minutes, and asked what ship it was. I told them it was a Republic, that there was no police, and that they had better go ashore. I promised them not to do anything for two weeks. I said I would stop aboard. They came down into the cabin, searched everything and took what they wanted. They said they had no money, and I told them I had none. They searched one another; they would not trust one another. I told them that I thought Lips had got the money. He was stripped of his clothes. The others were only felt over. I am not aware that any money was found. Some of the men kissed me before they left. French Peter, Joe the Cook, and Big Harry kissed me before they left. Johnny Moore did not leave the vessel. He could



not. The boat which left was full. I heard Peter Petersohn and some others talking on the deck. They said the others had gone, and they would go ashore too."

In due course Justice overtook these wretches; they were brought to England, tried, and executed.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

· MULLER.

OF all the days of excitement which Bow Street has seen, few could approach that Saturday in 1864, when the railway stations at Camden Town and Euston, from top to bottom, were crammed with eager sight-seers. The reader will readily guess who was thus waited for: one, who had been captured after an anxious expectancy and an almost providential combination of chances—the notorious Franz Muller, the German, who had murdered the poor old city gentleman, in the North London Railway carriage, on the evening of July 9, 1864, the deed being done within three minutes and a half—the time spent between two stations. There were incidents of savagery and merciless brutality, that seemed to call out from the hideous wounds—“*No mercy for him.*” In that short space this wretched being had fought and conquered the old man after a desperate struggle, and then flung him out on the permanent way—leaping out himself with his miserable booty—only a watch—no cash after all!

Now of all the difficult things, the tracing a murderer

—whose victim has been thus casually met with—seems one of the most hopeless. But the English police really distinguished itself on this occasion. A little before ten o'clock that night, as the train from Fenchurch Street arrived at Hackney, a gentleman, who was about to enter a carriage, called the guard's attention to its condition. The cushions were saturated, there was a pool of blood upon the floor, and on the brass work of the window were distinct impressions of bloody fingers. Almost at the same time, an engine-driver returning from Hackney Wick saw a dark object lying in the way, and getting down with his mate found it was the body of a gentleman who still lived. He was carried to a house, and it was found that his skull was fractured and battered fearfully. He lingered on till midnight, when he expired. From letters found in his pocket, it was discovered that this was Mr. Briggs, an old and faithful servant and chief clerk in the bank of Messrs. Robartes, of Lombard Street. He had left his bank at three, had dined with his niece at Peckham, and had been seen into an omnibus in the Old Kent Road, which would take him to the city, when he would return home comfortably. On examining his pockets, a sum of four pounds ten was found in gold and silver, while a portion of his gold guard hung from his button, showing that he had been robbed of his watch. Further, a hat—which was not Mr. Briggs' hat—had been left in the carriage.

Many will recall the horror, indignation and pity caused by this barbarous murder: it touched the whole sympathy of the city—and there seemed to be this element in the case, that the murderer had committed the crime to little purpose, and had been disappointed in his hopes of profit.

As soon as the dreadful incidents were published in the papers, the hat and the watch furnished their mute but convincing testimony. A silversmith in Cheapside, bearing the significant name of Death, recalled that a man had exchanged a watch-chain with him, and it was found to be Mr. Briggs'. A cabman named Matthews then appeared, who described a young German from Cologne, named Muller, who had lodged at his house, but had disappeared since the murder. This man had been engaged to Matthews' sister, but the match had been broken off. With an extraordinary infatuation he had on his departure presented her with a little card-board box which was marked with the Cheapside silversmith's name, DEATH. The hat, too, was recognized as Muller's, for, by a strange chance, there had been much discussion between the pair, on the subject of hats; Muller admiring one of a particular cut and pattern on his friend's head, who was persuaded to order him one like it, for which he was never paid. To his late *fiancée* he had given his photograph, which was recognized by Death as that of the person who had brought him the chain.

While these things were being put together, there was a small sailing-vessel belonging to Messrs. Grimsell, that was on the point of sailing to New York. She was called the *Victoria*—and Muller came down to the London Docks, and paying 4*l.* for his passage, embarked. He had told one of his friends that he was to obtain a situation in the colonies worth 150*l.* a year. The *Victoria* sailed about July 15th, and some six weeks after was seen off the harbour of New York, when on August 24, a boat put off from the shore and boarded her. Two men had a short conversation with the captain, who called Muller to the after part of the ship. One of the men, who was Inspector Tanner, of the London police force, seized him by the arm. He asked what was the matter, when the other, who was a New York police-officer said, “*You are charged with the murder of Mr. Briggs.*” Thus justice had secured her prey. It had soon been ascertained in London that a man answering Muller’s description had sailed in the *Victoria*, and Tanner, and Sergeant Clarke, with Death, the silversmith, and Matthews, the cabman, had embarked in the *City of Manchester*. They had to wait some weeks in New York—every day looking out anxiously for the arrival of the sailing-ship.

After the customary formalities he was handed over to the English officers. One of the most exciting days Liverpool has witnessed was September 17, when the *Etna* arrived, having the officers and their prisoner on board. From Liverpool he travelled in

the custody of Inspector Tanner and Sergeant Clarke, and reached the Euston Square terminus at about a quarter to three in the afternoon. "Both at the Camden Station and at Euston, hundreds of people had assembled long before the train containing the prisoner was due. The uncertainty had the effect of lessening the pressure at one particular point, which was great enough as it was, and strong precautionary measures were taken at both places by the police and by the officials of the company to maintain order. Some hundreds of people had congregated on the Camden ticket-platform, and a telegram preceding the arrival of the train having been received there that Muller was in the last compartment of the last second-class carriage, a rush was made towards the lower part of the platform as the train, which was a very long one, appeared in sight. On its stopping the carriage containing the prisoner was besieged by the crowd. While the tickets were being collected the most eager curiosity was shown by the crowd to catch a glimpse of the prisoner, who sat between Tanner and Clarke, with his face to the engine, and great excitement prevailed. The tickets having been collected, the train moved on, many of the people as it did so giving vent to their feelings by hooting and groaning. On its arrival at the Euston Station the excitement was still more intense, and the exertions of a strong body of police were required to keep order. The train was drawn up so that the carriage containing Muller was

immediately opposite a side outlet into Seymour Street. There the Bow Street police-van stood, with its door towards the platform, ready to receive him ; and the moment he stepped upon the platform, which he did in a light, jaunty manner, he was assailed with groans. The officers Tanner and Clarke, having each hold of an arm of the prisoner, hurried him across the platform, and, amid a scene of tumult, entered the prison-van, which was then driven off, amid many manifestations of popular indignation. He was taken by way of Hampstead Road, Tottenham Court Road, and St. Giles's to Bow Street. There the same intense curiosity was shown to catch a glimpse of him. As the van passed along Bow Street, it was guarded by constables on foot and followed by an excited mob. The moment it stopped in front of the police-station a fearful rush was made towards it. Some minutes elapsed before a passage to the entrance to the station could be made and kept ; but at length the door was opened, and Muller alighted, amid a storm of groans and hisses, with a light step and almost flippant air. He did not seem in the least disconcerted by the hooting with which he was assailed by the mob, and to them his appearance was evidently disappointing. Slim, pale, short, with light sandy hair, and anything but attractive features, dressed in thin, shabby clothes, and wearing a battered white straw hat, he had a very ordinary appearance.

“ In the inspector's room the usual examination took

place, and the property found on him was described in general terms, and under this heading the only words entered on the sheet were 'A hat and a watch.' When Mr. Durkin read the charge over to him, his head drooped a little, and there was an appearance of exhaustion about him as he was being conducted from the inspector's room, but on gaining the yard outside he brightened up again and walked rapidly to his cell."

In due course he was tried and convicted. The German community in London took up his case with more than national ardour. On the very eve of the execution the King of Prussia telegraphed to her Majesty, asking that her prerogative of mercy might be exercised. It was felt, however, that public feeling would not allow of this being granted, and the request was refused. The 14th of November was the day of execution, which took place publicly at Newgate, under the old system. All night long the streets were blocked up with people waiting to see the painful exhibition, and it was said that 12*l.* was the price paid for a "room with a good view." The criminal showed much indifference, not to say courage, in his extremity, and, it was noted, raised his eyes with a sort of curiosity to the beam from which he was presently to be suspended. It was impossible, however, to feel sympathy for him; one had only to recall the scene in the railway carriage when he was battering out the



brains of an old man, and then flinging him out on the railway, to be cut in pieces by the next passing train. On the first glimpse, a storm of yells broke from the expectant crowd. An extraordinary incident attended his last moments. Dr. Cappel, a German clergyman, who attended him, had been unwearied in his attempts to extract a confession. The cap was drawn over his face when this strange, momentous conversation occurred :

*Dr. Cappel:* Muller, in a few moments you will be before God. I ask you again, and for the last time, are you guilty or not?

*Muller:* Not guilty.

*Dr. Cappel:* You are not guilty?

*Muller:* God knows what I have done.

*Dr. Cappel:* God knows what you have done? Does He also know that you have committed this crime?

*Muller:* Yes, I have done it!

At this moment the clergyman's face was bent over close to the shrouded head of the criminal, and the sound of the last words—"done it,"—was overpowered in the crash of the falling trap. The next second his body was swinging in the air.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE CLERKENWELL EXPLOSION.

THE year 1867 was to be remarkable for what was known as the Fenian scare. A few bold and desperate men had come from America, and had been diligently "enrolling" vast numbers of the Irish resident in England. Arms and money were brought into the country, and various *soi-disant* generals and colonels, whose commissions were conferred by the gang, imparted a theatrical colouring to the schemes. It seems clear that the rank and file followed reluctantly, and were intimidated; their support was but half-hearted; for all the violent acts which marked the year were the work of a few daring men, who succeeded in imparting general terror. The names of "General Halpin," "General Burke," "Colonel Healey," and "Captain McCafferty" became familiar.

What distinguished these Fenian attempts from other revolutionary acts was their hideous barbarity. Nothing could be baser or meaner than the murder at Manchester of a police sergeant (once described by Mr.

Gladstone as "a casualty"); and not less astonishing is it that the perpetrators should have since been held up as "martyrs." Another Fenian, known as "Captain Clancy," hotly pursued by two policemen, fired three times with his revolver at one, narrowly missing him. When finally captured he declared complacently, "Well, it was a good battle, and a fair duel well fought." In speeches like this all heroism seems to be extinguished, for the policemen were unarmed.

The complete success of the Manchester rescue—for the prisoners "Colonel Kelly" and "Captain Deasy" were never re-captured—disturbed the public mind a good deal. In most of the counties meetings for self-protection were held, and special constables sworn in. In London, too, there was much disquiet, as it was known to the police that the Fenian captains were plotting something. On November 20th two men were arrested by the police in Woburn Square, after a sort of scuffle and attempted rescue. Their names were Burke and Casey, and it proved that they were high and important personages in the Fenian ranks. They were brought up on many occasions at Bow Street. No doubt, encouraged by the success of the Manchester rescue, plots were laid to intercept the prison-van on its way to Bow Street; while other schemes were contrived, with the great Clerkenwell disaster, by a small party of desperadoes, who seemed to have been intoxicated by the power

placed in their hands, and the supplies of money which were freely sent to them from the "States." This idea, that supplies of money signify actual power and support, has often deluded the demagogue to his own destruction. Nothing so cajoles the dupe as the display of gold by his leaders. The two prisoners who were confined at Clerkenwell were allowed to see their friends, and it was declared that the bold suggestion to blow down the wall of the yard, while the prisoners were at exercise, was made by one of them. There were some half a dozen conspirators of a more feeble class—the two Desmonds, Mullany and Mullady, English, and some others, residing in the decayed streets around Golden Square.<sup>1</sup> They seemed to have little power to originate anything striking, and, accordingly, after a short delay, two more vigorous conspirators—one Barrett, and a "Captain" Murphy—came specially from Glasgow. Strange men and women were now observed to be hanging about the prison, puzzling the neighbours, who suspected them to be detectives. One of the conspirators, who revealed the plot, described how he frequently saw Barrett, and that their talk was all upon Burke, and how the

<sup>1</sup> It was felt to be important that prisoners of such distinction should be rescued, and the precedent of the Manchester attack was encouraging. But these men either lacked daring or ingenuity; and, indeed, the situation offered extraordinary difficulties. They were, in most cases, forced to act, owing to the terrorism of their associates.

release was to be contrived. "But nothing was done for a time until a letter was received from some party. I was asked to purchase some green copperas, which was used to bring out some invisible ink, and the letter was then read by Captain Murphy. The letter contained a drawing or plan of the House of Detention. The letter stated that a sewer ran under part of the wall, which was very weak at the place, and that a barrel of gunpowder must be obtained, and *it would blow the wall to hell*"—such was the favourite expression. "It must be also done about four o'clock, and they must get money to buy the powder a little at a time; and," added the worthy conspirator, "if they did not do it they *ought to be shot*." They had a full meeting about ten o'clock at night on December 11th. About a dozen, including Captain Murphy, who was lucky enough to disappear later, assembled. Strange to say the money necessary was difficult to make up; but the powder had been gradually brought together, enough, in small portions, to fill a barrel. In this strange council it was resolved to make the attempt on the following day.

At this council Barrett was flourishing a revolver, which went off and severely wounded one of the party, named Ryan. Captain Murphy then loaded another pistol, and presented it to one of the conspirators. It was settled that all should attend near the prison on the following day. The "Captain"

undertook the job—a ball was to be thrown over the wall to give the signal. But the Captain failed in the operation, and the fuse did not light. Barrett was very indignant, and undertook it himself on the following day, making the favourite declaration that “he would blow the place to hell.”

In this case, as in most others, the inevitable informer makes his appearance. Only the day before the explosion Mr. Pownall, the chairman of the magistrates, received a secret communication, warning him that an attempt would be made. Accordingly the governor, instead of allowing the prisoners to exercise in the ground at the usual hour—between three and four—changed it to ten in the morning. The police were also informed, and some extra men were sent to keep watch in the streets surrounding the prison. Many significant incidents were noted. A man came to one of the houses commanding the prison, and begged to be allowed to go up to the top that he might have a glimpse of some relative who was confined there. He was refused. A woman named Anne Justice was seen hanging about the prison all the day, and talking with men. One of the warders, looking up from within, noticed a window filled with men who were eagerly gazing down into the prison yard. Finally, as the hour drew on, it was noticed that Burke became much excited, and went often to the window of his cell.

One of the informers thus graphically described a

scene when Desmond was setting out to execute the hellish plot. "He kissed my wife, and bade her good-bye, saying he was going to take a jump. She told him not to be so foolish. He then leant over the door and whistled to me, and whispered, '*the thing must be done.*' I asked him what he meant. 'They're going to blow up the prison,' was the answer. I asked when? and he said, 'The thing must be done. We have found out from Anne Justice, by going in with Casey's dinner, the time at which they exercise in the yard, and the trick must be done between half-past three and four o'clock.' He then bade me good-bye and said; 'Jemmy, when I am blasted into eternity, pray for me; or, if I get off and am arrested, the next place will be Millbank.'"

On the momentous day, between three and four o'clock, some children were playing in Corporation Row outside the prison wall. People were passing and repassing; others were at their windows. A boy of thirteen, named Abbott, was standing at his door and noticed a man wheeling a small cart, containing a barrel, which he drew up close to the prison wall. He left the cart for a few moments and presently returned with what seemed fuses or squibs in his hand. The savage, ignorant brutality of what followed is unmatched in any country. Some children were playing about, and interested in his proceedings—to them he gave the squib he did not want. One of the older boys

was smoking, and from him he obtained a match. Then without a word this ruffian ran off, the others waiting to see the result.

But a policeman had noted something of these proceedings, and his suspicions were roused. When the man ran off he pursued; but just as he passed the cart a terrible explosion took place, convulsing the neighbourhood; while nearly the whole wall crumbled down in ruins, revealing the prison-yard. The officer was hurled to the ground, but with characteristic resolution he recovered himself, and leaped up.

Two men were rushing away, and the woman before alluded to, were caught by a policeman, who bravely held the men, one by each hand, until assistance came up. Six men were finally captured. The Desmonds, English, Mul-lany, Allen, O'Keefe, and the woman Ann Justice were brought up to Bow Street before Sir Thomas Henry. As the authorities were now dealing with desperadoes, the novel spectacle was seen of policemen armed to the teeth with revolvers and cutlasses, for fear of a rescue. There were several remands. Strange to say the woman Justice, on the night of her arrest, made a desperate attempt upon her life, and was with difficulty saved.

One of the informers met English, another of the conspirators, late that evening. He came to the door, saying, "For God's sake, Jemmy, give me as much as you can, for we want to send them off."



The other asked, "For what?" "What, haven't you heard?" was the reply; "the House of Detention is blown bang up." Then, as he said, he gave him two shillings, and could spare him no more, as business was slack. Next morning he heard him reading from the placard of a newspaper, and saying aloud the word "diabolical," when he added, "We'll burn the whole of London yet, and that will be a sight more diabolical."

The damage done was appalling, an immense piece of the wall was blown out nearly to the ground, some houses near were levelled, and windows were shattered far and near. But more disastrous was the effect on the innocent persons of the neighbourhood. Upwards of forty were injured more or less severely; one was killed on the spot, three more died shortly afterwards; little children playing close to the prison were shockingly mutilated, even infants in arms were shockingly injured. Yet this reckless, brutal business, an eminent statesman, the same who spoke of the Manchester murder as "a casualty," was now found to describe as an important political event, valuable as "having drawn attention" to the Irish Church.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> As much obloquy pursued him for this statement, which was turned to great profit by the Irish agitators, who declared that such violence was the only way of obtaining consideration for their wrongs, Mr. Gladstone furnished a justification of himself. He now likened the effect of the explosion to the sound of "the chapel bell" on some

It was known, however, that they had not found the man who had fired the barrel. Many of the persons who were near the spot declared they would recognize him. After many inquiries, and diligent investigation, the authorities turned their eyes to Glasgow, where they discovered that the whole plot had been hatched. A description of him was sent to that city, but he had disappeared, after having left his work. A strange accident discovered him. During the night of January 14th, a policeman heard the sound of firearms in the street, and hurried to the spot where he found two men. On being questioned they put him off with "chaff," saying it was some boys discharging a squib. They then offered a drink, but the officer was not to be got rid of, and insisted on taking them to the station. On the road one of them ingeniously made a leap into the air, as if to stretch his limbs, and it was later found that he had thrown away a revolver. This sudden return and the likeness to the description sent down awakened grave suspicions. A telegram was despatched to London, which was answered by the arrival of Inspector

tranquil Sunday morning, when he was reading, "I trust," he added, "a *good* book." This blessed sound warns him that it is time to attend service. It is not the *cause* of his attending service, but it "draws his attention." This likening of the innocent chapel bell to the villainous explosion was in the worst taste, and did not improve the argument. Indeed, any deed of extra violence in Ireland is thus described as "ringing the chapel bell."

Williamson and four of his subordinates, who, convinced that he was the man they "wanted," carried him to London. It was indeed Barrett, and the man who had put the light to the fatal barrel, and when he arrived there were plenty to identify him. Mr. George Grossmith describes the rather alarming precautions taken at Bow Street Police-Office, the van being escorted by a large squadron of mounted police well-armed, soldiers also attending, who kept the streets clear. It seemed like an invested town. Nor were these precautions uncalled for; the ruffians, who showed as much stupidity as desperation, were going about with revolvers, which they produced on small provocation. As we have seen, a fellow was arrested in Bedford Square, who instantly discharged two shots from his revolver, and when thrown down attempted to fire again, but the ball jammed.

Whatever want of clearness there was in identifying Barrett was supplied by the informer Mullany, one of the accused, who gave fullest evidence against him. At the trial one of the usual *alibis* was manufactured in the Fenian circle—the plan of which was suggested by Barrett himself in a letter—in which he begged them to find out certain shoemakers to whom he had given orders on the very day of the explosion. They were to ask "if they *didn't* recollect his coming and his being angry at his boots not being ready," with other matters which were exactly recalled. This

*alibi* was supported by a number of witnesses, mostly agreeing in their testimony, and was so ingeniously built up that the Chief Justice said, "It was the most remarkable instance he ever remembered." No doubt, as he suggested, the incidents of the boot-repairing had occurred—but not at that time. On this theory may be readily explained the ingenious fashion in which this *alibi* was supported. Nothing could be clearer than the evidence of Barrett's presence in London at the time, and so it appeared to the jury who found him "guilty."

When sentence was about to be pronounced, a curious and not undramatic scene was enacted. The prisoner was allowed to deliver an extraordinary, impassioned address, of a native dignity and pathos, that was scarcely in keeping with the crime for which he had been convicted. In fierce and bitter terms he denounced the witnesses and approvers who had appeared against him. "Never," he said, "did he feel the supreme degradation of his country till that day." He protested, but in guarded terms, his innocence. But he was going away to a land where justice would be done him, and those who had inflicted this wrong on him would have punishment meted out to them.

A deep impression was made on all who listened, and some had uneasy suspicions that such a calm and dignified demeanour could only be compatible with innocence. Yet one had only to turn back to the

scene outside the prison, and contrast this sensitiveness as to his own life with the barbarous callousness to the fate of dozens of persons, young, old, and infants in arms, who were injured or killed by his act.

The execution was fixed for May 12th. There was much discussion as to the conviction, and many were impressed by the ingenious *alibi*. So earnestly pressed were these objections, that a respite of a week was granted; while commissioners were despatched to Glasgow to inquire into the *alibi*. This took up more time than was anticipated, and the respite was extended to another week. It was found, however, that the *alibi* did not gain by the examination; and the result was that, in the usual form, "the Secretary saw no grounds for interfering with the due course of law."

The execution took place on May 26th, and it was remarkable that this was the last public execution seen in England. Numerous crowds assembled round Newgate, and greeted the malefactor, as he appeared, with yells of execration; for the recollection of the brutal act which he had perpetrated, and the widespread destruction, had roused the mob. It was said he behaved with wonderful firmness, without any bravado; and his confessor declared that he showed genuine penitence, if not for the act, for his course of life.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE FEMALE PERSONATORS.

THE alternations of tragedy and farce and even pantomime weekly exhibited at Bow Street Office, together with the extraordinary variety of entertainment that turned up, was perhaps never better illustrated than in the decade of years that stretched from about 1870 to 1880. What could be more contrasted than the case of Governor Eyre with Slade's, the slate writer; or of Barrett, the villain of the Clerkenwell tragedy, with that of the female personators?

On the morning of April 30th, 1870, the *habitués* of the court were amused and astonished to see at the bar two young men, arrayed, one in a cherry-coloured silk dress and fair wig; the other in green silk, lace, ribbons, and such female finery. They were two young men named Boulton and Park; and the case, which opened with this strange incident, was to draw the town and excite an interest that grew from day to day. It came out that the pair, who had a feminine appearance, were in the habit of going about to theatres and other places of amusement, such as the

Alhambra and the Burlington, dressed up as women—painted and frizzed; and it must be said, that whatever were the results they looked for from such visits, their stay was of the briefest, for the guardians of such places no sooner detected their presence, than they ejected them summarily. A domiciliary visit being made to their rooms, an enormous and costly female wardrobe was discovered and seized; many dozens of ladies' "pads," shawls, bonnets, hats, ornaments—were found in profusion, and, it was said, to the value of some hundred pounds. A now-forgotten phrase, "going in drag," was, it seems, the term for this disgusting masquerading.<sup>1</sup> As in such theatrical cases, the interest swelled in a geometrical ratio, and by leaps and bounds. Crowds blocked up the street to see the "Female Personators" arrive and depart in the van. The court was invaded by celebrities from the theatrical and literary world, together with many members of the peerage, always curious in such cases.

As it was unfolded from day to day, an extraordinary picture of society, unsuspected by many, was revealed. It appeared that there were a number of

<sup>1</sup> At this time Mr. Willing, the adventurous advertiser, about to start a new journal called *London*, gave a grand dinner to the future contributors; and Mr. Sala, being in the chair, took occasion, I well recollect, to rally his friend Arthur Sketchley on his favourite creation of "Mrs. Brown," which he declared was a form of "going in drag." With pleasant humour, too, he announced that the new journal would appear on such a day, "*God willing.*"

persons who affected this effeminate mode of disguising themselves; and a ball was described, given by a patron—a university man, barely of age—at a respectable hotel in the Strand, when a large section of the company were gentlemen arrayed as ladies, and who gravely took part in the dances, round and otherwise.

So imperceptible are the changes constantly taking place in society, that we are apt to forget the curious contrast offered by what was in fashion fifteen or twenty years ago, and what odd humours then excited the public mind. How curious, for instance, was the excitement produced by a play called “*Formosa*,” which called forth a vigorous controversy in the papers, and which, compared with some existing pieces, was a poor and shadowy attempt at portraying vice. So, too, with the raids on houses of entertainment in Panton Street and other localities, where bad champagne was drunk by noblemen and swells at prohibited hours. The public was then regularly shocked or scandalized by matter which now would cause a smile of wonder. On the other hand, things are, at least, more decorous. This instance of the “*Female Personators*,” which in its development assumed an ugly and repulsive aspect, was but the outer eruption significant of a deeper social disease within. It will be remembered that at the time there were a number of young aristocrats “on town,” whose low and vulgar extravagancies excited much attention and scandal. The name of one



of these became connected with the present scandal; but before the law became seized of the case, he died.

After many hearings the young men were committed for trial, and the matter passed from Bow Street. At the trial the case broke down, and the two young men were acquitted.

## CHAPTER XXI.

KURR AND BENSON.

WITHIN recent years there has hardly been a case which so curiously revealed the *haute école*, as it may be called, of criminal life, as the one which laid open the career of Kurr, Benson, and the police-inspectors. Modern practitioners have become rather clumsy and heavy of touch in this work; but in this episode we seem to be reading a chapter from Vidocq's memoirs; and, in spite of ourselves, are constrained to admire the ingenuity and clever intellectual arts by which those skilled swindlers carried out their designs. The ordinary race of thieves work in unintelligent fashion, and bring few intellectual resources to their calling; but we may suspect, or fear, that, if the higher qualities of patience, ingenious deception, and other mental powers, were duly applied, the resources of civilization and detection would be at a serious disadvantage. Nothing illustrates this so well as two modern instances—romances of crime—which occurred only a few years ago, the details of which have almost passed out of recollection. These are the wonderful plot

contrived by Kurr and Benson, with the assistance of some police-inspectors—Meiklejohn, Palmer, and Druscovich; the other case being the robbery of the Bank of England, carried out by Macdonnell and his confederates. Both of these schemes exhibited powers of elaborate contrivance and ingenuity which would have brought success to a better cause; and both, it is to be remarked, were carried on by professors of foreign nationality, or who, at least, had graduated abroad.

The pair, Kurr and Benson, were extraordinary characters—of amazing energy, readiness of resource; while Benson, in particular, possessed flexible gifts and a knowledge of character, and of the motives that work on character, in an exceptional degree. Kurr had been employed in a railway office; but we soon find him seeking another and larger sphere of action, and acquiring the rudiments of roguery in a money-lending house. Here becoming familiar with the seamy side of the Turf, he began to see what an opening for money-making was offered in the *credulity* of a class of the community who can be attracted by disinterested offers to risk cash on races. In 1873 we find him at Edinburgh as “Gardiner & Co.,” directing a society for what were called “discretionary investments.” The day of such enterprises has long since gone by: the law has since been at work to check and destroy them: the public has learned distrust by severe ex-

perience. "Gardiner & Co." soon disappeared, and with it its director. Kurr would never have done much had not his fortune brought him in contact with an ally of superior tact and ability. This was Benson, whose father was a merchant of respectability in Paris, where the son had been educated. He was an accomplished linguist, and had acquired a French varnish and plausibility, together with a  *finesse*  and spirit of intrigue, which helped him to control or entangle the plain, trusting characters with whom he was to come in contact later. It is remarkable that almost every one of his enterprises were attended with brilliant success, and distinguished by ingenuity. Thus, during the late French War there appeared at Brussels, amongst the refugees, a fashionable Count de Montagu, son of a General de Montagu, who drove handsome equipages and attracted attention from the gay style in which he lived, being moreover an agreeable, insinuating, wealthy  *viveur* . This versatile personage's career during this period was long remembered in that engaging city. Charitable subscriptions were then being collected in England for the relief of the distressed French, and a French gentleman of distinction presented himself to the Lord Mayor to solicit a share of the subscriptions for the population of Chateaudun, which had suffered much. He put their case so favourably, and with such winning grace, that he received a thousand pounds to distri-

bute among them. This proved to be the ingenious Benson once more, who, however, was captured, brought to London, tried, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment in Newgate. Here he committed what later must have appeared to him to have been a sad *bêtise* and a blunder, for in his despair he set himself on fire, and burnt himself so severely that he became paralyzed and a cripple; though he afterwards recovered so far as to be able to walk with the aid of crutches. Such a disability, however, added an additional difficulty to the carrying out his schemes—a cripple being easy of identification; but this made him develop his talents in other directions, where this impediment would not interfere.

Released, he sent out advertisements, offering literary assistance as a secretary or linguist, and by a curious chance the notices fell under Kurr's eye. This led to an acquaintance and partnership. Kurr was at this moment planning some daringly ambitious schemes. He felt that the United Kingdom was quite too narrow a field for his operations, and that the danger of working out betting frauds there was too serious. The credulity and greed of the French, and their taste for gambling, offered more favourable opportunities. Here was Benson—a half Frenchman and linguist—ready to his hand, and the confederates speedily concocted their scheme.

In the course of his various plans, Kurr had become

acquainted with one of the inspectors at Scotland Yard, a person named Meiklejohn, who was presently to be appointed chief detective officer at one of the chief stations in the North. The police were at the moment on the track of "Gardiner & Co.," one of Kurr's bogus schemes. Kurr being informed that Meiklejohn was in charge of the case, the two men soon became intimate; and about 1874 we find Kurr giving the officer sums of money—200*l.* on one occasion—to secure his protection. It was now that the brilliant and original idea—no doubt suggested by Benson—was developed, which was to obtain the general connivance, if not protection, of the leading detectives at the office; and it was obvious that if this could be contrived, the conspirators could pursue their work in perfect safety. So skilfully did they lay their plans, that they succeeded. They had plenty of funds, for no sooner had one bogus firm "blown up," than another was started; and "Archer & Co.," their latest association, had netted them a sum of over 10,000*l.* There was much art in this idea which could only be carried out by patience and many transactions; and thus, if they were in the power of the detectives, the detectives were in their power.

The inspectors they were to suborn were Meiklejohn, before named; Druscovich, who was engaged in foreign detective business; Palmer, and Clarke. All were under the direction of the better-known Inspector

Williamson, whom his subordinates considered somewhat old-fashioned and *passé*, or, at least, easy to hoodwink. The whole presently became as interesting as a romance, of course of the most seamy character. The temptation was irresistible. The inspectors, indifferently paid, found themselves brought into connection with these really opulent swindlers, who were so brilliantly successful that they seemed to command any sums of money; who were liberal too, and clever, and in fact completely reversed the relation between policeman and knave. The former had not virtue enough to resist, and one by one fell an easy prey to their tempters. The curious part was, as the swindlers well knew, that each officer, as he succumbed, was the more eager to draw his fellows into the conspiracy, for his own better protection. A letter which Meiklejohn wrote to his friend in November, 1874, shows on what intimate terms the men were, and how efficacious was the officers' protection:—

“DEAR BILL,—Rather important news from the North. Tell H. S. and the young one to keep themselves quiet. In the event of a smell stronger than now, they must be ready to scamper out of the way. I should like to see you as early as possible. Bring this note with you. In any circumstances, the brief is out. If not, it will be so; so you must keep a sharp look-out.—F.”

This referred to the affair of "Archer & Co.," on whose track the police then were. For his kindly service in this respect, Meiklejohn received the handsome sum of 500*l.*, with which he was enabled to purchase a house in Lambeth.

Druscovich was now to be drawn in. His colleague mentioned that he was pressed for money, when Kurr, with much friendliness, offered him a sum of 60*l.*, which, after some hesitation, was accepted. Druscovich at this time was on the track of two confederates of Kurr's, Walker and Murray, who had been engaged in a "Society for Insurance against Losses on the Turf," the only "losses" not insured against being those of the dupes who sent them their money; and he had intercepted a letter from France containing cash.

We now turn to the sybarite invalid Benson, who had installed himself at Shanklin, Isle of Wight, in a handsome establishment, where he kept carriages and horses, and lived in good style under the name of Yonge. Cripple as he was, Mr. Yonge's gifts, as usual, left a deep impression on the neighbours. He made his way in society, composed and sung French songs with much taste and expression, and was generally acceptable. There are many who still can tell of the cordial receptions which the accomplished swindler met with; and on one occasion, when the Empress of Austria was appealed to for some charity or festivity,



it was to the agreeable Mr. Yonge that a letter of effusive thanks was addressed on the part of her Majesty, recognizing his devotion. It is said, indeed, that the dramatic and powerful story of Miss Florence Warden, "The House on the Marsh," was suggested by this curious episode.

It was while he was down there that he learned that his confederate was in some danger ; and it occurred to him that it would be all important to gain over the chief inspector at Scotland Yard—one who was presumed to be honest, viz. Inspector Clarke. His operations in reference to this officer showed consummate tact and ability. Learning that he was engaged in hunting up one of their betting societies, he took the bold course of inviting him down to his house, holding out a hope that he could communicate some intelligence. After some hesitation, Clarke arrived, when Benson exhibited much art in his dealing with him, representing himself frankly as having been indiscreet, confessing that he knew the incriminated person, and had but a poor opinion of him. He then skilfully introduced the subject of a letter which Clarke had incautiously written to one of the parties, and which he now insinuated had been photographed for the purpose of ruining the inspector. Having thus sufficiently alarmed him, the host of Rosebank took another tone—affected to dread going into the witness-box, and in a friendly way pressed on his guest a note for 100*l.*,

to secure his aid in this respect. The inspector, however, put aside this handsome *douceur* without remark. An arrangement, however, was made that they should correspond, but it does not appear that with all his exertions Benson succeeded in tampering with the inspector; and the latter, though later put on trial, was cleared of the charges.

With all these delights, however, Benson, or Yonge, did not forget business.

The pair were now planning a bold, daring *coup* which, extraordinary to relate, was carried through with the utmost success, and was clearly owing to the inspiration of Benson. The idea, we are told, was first suggested *in a cab*, on the night of August 3rd, 1875. This brilliant notion was to change the whole scene of action to French soil, and work on the fruitful material of French greed and credulity. The plan suggested was to scatter circulars broadcast among the most gullible members of the community, of which Benson's French experience could supply him with knowledge. With the circulars were sent copies of a single number of a French paper published in England, and which in glowing terms set out all the advantages of the system. This paper was "No. 1713," but the truth was, it was the only number of the journal in existence, and it had been printed specially at Edinburgh for the purpose. Other details of the plot were arranged in the most elaborate way. Offices were taken in various quarters, and members of this "long

firm" were allotted their parts. Thus, Kurr's brother was ready to answer for "Mr. Montagu;" one Ball represented "Mr. Elliston;" others were ready to answer inquiries at Cleveland Row, Duke Street, &c. Through the agency of the police-inspectors two local postmasters were bought over, either to give notice of or to intercept letters from France, presumed to contain complaints. Thus, everything being duly anticipated and prepared, they were ready to commence operations.

The confederates almost at once succeeded in "hooking" a most desirable victim in the shape of a Comtesse de Goncourt, who had some money to invest. She was dazzled by the glowing programme set out in *Le Sport*, the bogus newspaper sent to her. Here was unfolded a wonderful story of the career of a Mr. Hugh Montgomery, who had invented an extraordinary and potent system of betting by which he had made 575,000*l.*, which sum, *Le Sport* added, he was now spending in works of charity. The bait took: the unhappy lady was induced to send various large sums, in return for which she received cheques drawn on "The Royal Bank, London," another bogus institute, by one "George Simpson." At first she was allowed to win some money, and was gradually lured on to send sums amounting to 10,000*l.* to a man called "T. Allerton," who ludicrously signed himself "*a sworn book-maker*"—a happy and plausible description.

The letters addressed by these knaves to their dupe,

whom they managed with wonderful art, cannot be read without a smile. Cheques were despatched to large amounts on the mythical bank, which, it is to be presumed, were not to be presented till a certain time had elapsed. The success of these manœuvres was extraordinary. The confederacy calculated that they received in all about 14,000*l.* from a simple confiding French Lady. Not content with their booty, the sharpers persuaded her that, to effectually secure what she had won, "it was essential by the laws of England" that a further sum of 1200*l.* should be sent. This the foolish lady came to Paris to raise, but on consulting her man of business the fraud was discovered.

The defrauded Frenchmen applied at once to the police, who communicated with the officers in London. The Police had begun to stop the letters of the firm, containing, it was said, remittances to the amount of 8000*l.*, and had telegraphed to Dover to that effect. But Benson had contrived, by suborning some one there, to have the telegram intercepted, so that it did not reach the hands of Inspector Williamson. One day, however, Druscovich came to give the company a warning: "A big swindle had come in from Paris;" the case had been put into his hands to follow up. The firm was not disturbed, for they knew that the officers must work in their interests. Then followed strange, mysterious meetings with Druscovich in that

deep archway which passes under the South Eastern Railway at Charing Cross. The inspector was much excited and agitated, for he knew the perilous, "ticklish" position in which he stood—obliged as he was to take action against his confederates, and yet obliged by them to be slack in his movements. He could not refrain from expressing his admiration of some of the French letters from Benson that had come into his hands. "You have got a clever fellow," he said, "behind you. *Talk of Victor Hugo!* I never read such French"—a compliment to "the address" of the ingenious Benson. Still he would say desperately, "I shall have to arrest *somebody*; what am I to do? However, I have told you, so look out for yourselves." This, however, did not disturb them. They knew well it was rather he who would have to look out for *himself*. At last they were informed that a warrant was actually out to take Kurr, and that its execution was unavoidable.

A very exciting and agitating part of the drama now begins. Confident as Kurr was that he would be protected, he foresaw that the police might, after all, be driven into taking action. The confederates were also anxious about their booty, which was all in Bank of England notes, whose numbers could, of course, be traced. Here their ingenuity did not fail them, and Benson was despatched down to Scotland, to change the notes into Scotch ones. It seems at

that time it was not customary to take the numbers of Scotch notes. Meiklejohn had a friend at one of the banks near or at Alloa, and gave an introduction. This business was soon concluded, and Benson exchanged his valuable freight of 13,000*l.* for Clydesdale Bank notes. There was much friendliness between the bank manager, Mr. Monteith, and this important customer, who had besides deposited some 3000*l.* in this bank. A dinner was given to Monteith, but during the banquet an ominous telegram from the police-offices in London was put into Benson's hand. It ran:—"Important. If *Shanks* be with you, let him leave at once. D. (Druscovich) leaves to-night, and will be down in the morning." The confederates hastily made their apologies to their guests, and hurried away. Unluckily, they had to leave their 3000*l.* behind them. But the net was drawing round them. Druscovich duly arrived, found the birds flown. He made inquiries in a deliberate sort of way, and did what he could to help his friends.

Meanwhile, Benson came up by Derby, where he stopped to see Meiklejohn, who had just received 200*l.* from Kurr—notes which he changed at Leeds with a sort of reckless carelessness. His friend told him that this was foolish, when the other said that "the inspector at the place was his friend, and would keep all quiet." But it was now becoming impossible to check the course of pursuit. Druscovich's slackness

and general manner of proceeding was already causing suspicion. Notice had been sent out to watch for Clydesdale Bank notes, some of whose numbers were known. Still the pair pursued their course unconcernedly, being most eager to recover their deposited money. It had been proposed to Druscovich, who went down to arrest them, that he should arrange matters with the manager. There were further interviews with Druscovich by night, who showed much agitation, declaring that he was being watched by the authorities. But at last word was sent that it was no longer safe to stay, and Benson had to hurry suddenly on board the Rotterdam steamer. At the New Bath Hotel he gave the landlord one of his 100*l.* Clydesdale notes to change, who presently returned with the police, and he was carried off to prison.

Another confederate of these men now comes on the scene. This was Froggatt, an attorney of a low class—part of the seamy fringe of a police-court, and who seems to have made a livelihood by giving professional aid—large and small—to rogues of all kinds. This man, who seems to have been more than unscrupulous, was now consulted, and almost his first act was the impudent one of sending a telegram in the name of the London police to the effect that “these were the wrong men, and that they were to let them go!” This *ruse* had all but succeeded. He was then furnished with money to go over and “square” the

Dutch judge, which, he said, it was notorious could be done for a few pounds! His efforts proved unavailing. A demand was then made for the extradition of Benson, and a strong party of police was sent to bring him over. Either by chance or intention, Druscovich was in charge of this force. It must have been a curious scene when he and his prisoner conversed in French in the cabin—the officer in a sort of despair declaring that he would have to go through with it all.

This virtually closed the career of the swindlers. Kurr, who was coolly attending the police-courts, and looking after other business, was actually negotiating with the De Goncourts for the restitution of some of the money; but it was now too late. He was arrested. Even when in the House of Detention these extraordinary men had elaborated a plot for their release, so ingenious and effective that it all but succeeded. They had succeeded in suborning some of the warders: and they had complete communication with each other. They used to carry on a correspondence by putting letters into the warders' boots. In due course they were tried and sentenced—Kurr to ten, and Benson to fifteen years' hard labour.

This, however, was not to be their last appearance on the stage, even though the prison doors had closed upon them. In September, 1877, to the astonishment of the public, the two men made their appearance at Bow Street in very dramatic fashion. In their prison



they had taken thought of their condition, and perhaps the most exasperating of their reflections must have been the idea that those policemen, who deserved punishment as richly as themselves, should now be at large, and enjoying the fruits of their earnings with perfect impunity. Disclosures were made to the governor; the matter was legally investigated, with the result that the four officers were placed at the bar to confront the two convicts, who appeared in their prison dress. The officers, in due course, were brought to trial, when the whole of the curious incidents we have been following were unfolded. Clarke, as we have seen, was acquitted, to the satisfaction and applause of the audience. Meiklejohn, Palmer, Druscovich, and Froggatt the attorney, were sentenced to short periods of imprisonment with hard labour. All made despairing appeals to the judge, putting forward their wives and children as an excuse for lenient treatment.

Time rolled on, and the term that seemed lifelong at the beginning was exhausted. Last year, in 1887, the ingenious Benson was set free. But a person of such versatile talent was not likely to let it lie fallow long. After a short interval, rumours came from Switzerland of some skilfully devised fraud for raising, i.e. getting possession, of other people's money. An insinuating and accomplished stranger, speaking many languages, was named, and this proved to be

Mr. Harry Benson. In a very short space of time the swindler had contrived some fresh schemes that were quite worthy of his former exertions.

“Harry Benson,” so ran the account, “who has been arrested in America, and has for some time been wanted in England, was in this country about a year ago, when he succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the police, who were then on his track. During his stay at Portsmouth Convict Prison, where he underwent the greater part of his fifteen years’ penal servitude, Benson’s father, who occupied an influential position, having offices in the Faubourg St. Honoré, Paris, died, and as soon as he was liberated Benson went there to ascertain whether any provision had been made for him, when he found that he had been cut off without the proverbial shilling. His brother, however, offered to find employment for him, but this Benson flatly rejected, and at once renewed his partnership with the Kurrs, who had kept up such a persistent correspondence with Benson after their imprisonment had expired, that the authorities determined to narrowly watch all three of them. The Kurrs accompanied Benson to Paris, whence after the nature of the will was discovered, they proceeded to America. There they turned their attention to starting companies, chiefly for working mines, and it is tolerably certain that in this way they made a great deal of money. Finding that the police were now making inquiries

about them, the party went to Belgium, where again they exploited in companies. The Brussels police were there assisted by the authorities of Scotland Yard, and it was not long before Benson was arrested. At his lodging the police found in letters that had not been opened prior to the seizure 140*l.* in post-office orders and cheques, and this money was at once returned to the senders. Benson was then sentenced to two years and sixteen days' imprisonment. On his release he returned to America, still closely watched by the police, but it is alleged he succeeded in several frauds, for which he is still 'wanted.' His next adventure was at Geneva, where he passed himself off as an American banker, stopping at the best hotels, presiding at the *table d'hôte*, and keeping his horses and carriage. Here he was constantly receiving telegrams from his confederates in America, telling him that certain bonds were at a high price, and requesting his authority to sell. These telegrams he carelessly allowed to lie about in the billiard-room, smoking-room, and other apartments, where they were read by others, and consequently enhanced the reputation in which he was held. At this hotel he is stated to have made the acquaintance of a retired surgeon-general of the Indian army, and contracted an engagement with the officer's daughter. He presented her with quantities of jewellery, and obtained the father's consent to marriage. He discovered that

the officer was worth 7000*l.*, invested in the Indian 4 per Cents. At Benson's advice the doctor ordered his agent in London to sell out, and the money having been remitted to Geneva was placed in the hands of Benson, who gave in exchange certain scrip, which he pretended would double the officer's interest. The telegrams came now so frequently that Benson determined to return to America, and he left word as to the boat by which he would proceed, but his *fiancée*, having a desire to witness his departure, went to the boat and found he had gone by another route. It was then found that Mr. Churchwood—so Benson called himself—had gone to Bremen, booking there to America. He was arrested just as he was stepping on board. He was brought back to Geneva, but on refunding 5000*l.* of the money of the surgeon-general he was liberated. It was then found that the jewellery that he had presented to his *fiancée* was only brass and glass, while the scrip he had given in exchange for the 7000*l.* was worth only 32*l.* Soon after this Benson left Europe, completely baffling the police, who believed that he was in America, but since November they have been without any definite clue. They have therefore sent his photograph to every important centre in the world.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written, Benson has added some extraordinary incidents to his strangely chequered career of adventure. Escaping to America, he passed to Mexico, where, by a brilliant *coup*, he con-

There is another case of the same *genre* as this other one we have been following, and which offers an extraordinary instance of misapplied ingenuity and cleverness. It belongs to the *haute école* of swindling, for here was found an extraordinary investment of patience. Large sums of money were laid out as it were at interest, so as to purchase an air of credit, with assumed habits of business, a part which could only have been sustained by skilled performers. This was the case of the bills forged on the Bank of England in 1873, for which an elaborate scheme was planned, and spread over many months. But for the most trifling of accidents it had succeeded, and the Bank would have lost by this great *coup* over 100,000*l.* ! It must be said that the case does not legitimately fall within our province here, as it was dealt with at the Mansion House ; but as it and the Kurr-Benson cases stand apart, and are the only two cases in modern times that show what Fielding would have called real "greatness," the story may not be thought out of place. After fifteen years the details are likely to have grown faint, and are forgotten by most persons.

trived to pass himself off as Mr. Abbey, Patti's *entrepreneur*, and succeeded in obtaining some 25,000 dollars, for tickets, &c. Being captured and brought to New York, and his appeal to the courts being rejected in the May of the present year, he decoyed his gaoler up a steep flight of stairs in his prison, and flinging himself over the bannisters, fractured his spine, and died shortly afterwards. He is said to have left memoirs of his singular life.

In Saville Row are found many professors of tailoring, including the eminent artist who has so long regulated the attire of the most eminent gentleman in the kingdom. In the month of April, 1872, a person of gentlemanly address and quiet manners came to order clothes at one of these establishments. He appeared to be an American, and, like most of his countrymen who come to England for pleasure, was a highly desirable customer. This gentleman, it proved, was at that time living in humble lodgings in Kingsland, with two or three friends, arch-swindlers, who had come to England to arrange some bold and ingenious schemes. He was well supplied with cash, and consulted his tailor how he was to place a large sum, about 1200*l.*, in safe keeping, as he was a stranger, and such was an embarrassment. Now this was an artful stroke, for an inferior intellect would have probably attempted what was the reverse of this proceeding, viz., some clumsy device to obtain money on the basis of the orders he had given. But after being thus fitted out by the tailor, he and his friends left their humble lodgings in Kingsland and departed in different directions. Austin Bidwell and Macdonnell repaired to the leading capitals of Germany, the others to France, &c. They went provided with letters of introduction, letters of credit from the leading banks and merchants in London, all of which were adroitly

forged. So skilfully did they pursue their scheme that they returned to London without being detected, and with spoil amounting to no less than 8000*l.* In the next month they set off for Buenos Ayres, bearing with them a letter of introduction and letters of credit from the London and Westminster Bank. So favourably were these credentials received that they were enabled to carry off some 10,000*l.* booty.

The choice of "aliases" showed some skill, and was elaborate to a degree. But a genteel euphony is essential, and there is a sort of tact even in such trifles. Thus, Austin Biron Bidwell was "otherwise" Frederick Albert Warren, "otherwise" Charles Johnson Horton. His companions, however, did not venture on assuming other names. The chief conspirator was but twenty-seven, and the oldest of the party was only thirty-four. Austin Bidwell the contriver of the whole, was only five or six and twenty. Their history was a curious one. Two years before, Macdonnell, who had relations in Ireland, visited that country in company with his friend, Austin Bidwell. Their first operation was to convert a cheque on the Bank of Ireland for 3*l.* into one for 3000*l.*! On this they obtained cash from a bank in Belfast.

In Burlington Gardens stands an imposing nobleman's mansion of the olden time, and of much pretension, and which is now used by the Bank of

England as its branch office. It was to be expected that the neighbouring tradesmen would make use of this establishment for the various transactions, and accordingly we are not surprised to find that the tailor's customer was introduced to Colonel Francis, at that time directing the bank. There was a subtlety in these introductory proceedings which certainly gave the fairest earnest of success.

Having walked with the tailor to the bank and deposited his money, the simple stranger innocently inquired of the manager if it were necessary when he had other funds to deposit, to bring his friend with him every time. The officials must have smiled as they assured him that the account was his own, and that he could pay in or withdraw as he pleased. Twelve hundred pounds was his first deposit, to which he presently added a thousand more. This was allowed to remain for some three months, when "Mr. Warren" asked the manager to sell some Portuguese stock for him, amounting to no less a sum than 8000*l.* At this interview, Warren or Bidwell, carelessly threw out that he was an American contractor who had come over to work the Pullman car business in this country, that they were to be built at Birmingham, where a factory would be started, and he hoped to have some ready for the exhibition then impending. There was no eagerness for money, and the bonds were left in charge of the bank, which was favourably impressed by



the character of "the new customer." But the confederates were not idle. In the interval they had been preparing their plans, going over and making inquiries in the various cities of Europe as to the great firms, their mode of drawing bills, &c. Patience and no precipitation were their watchwords. When two of the party were ill the leading spirit wrote that they must not suppose he would proceed at once. Far from it, "the first consideration is your health, and if necessary we will postpone business until Christmas: if you require rest for ten days more, for Heaven's sake take it. We have a good capital, and can readily increase it on short notice." At Christmas their operations began.

The first point was to obtain genuine bills for discount, and great pains and labour were expended with this view. One of the party went to Rotterdam and purchased bills on the London banks. With much ingenuity the forms of the various bills were copied, engravers being employed on contrivances to prepare the plates. The ground being thus got ready, it was resolved after Christmas to deal their *coup*. Every risk had been provided for. For instance, the bank which was about to discount these bills would pay them in notes, whose numbers would lead to detection. An account was opened with another bank, the Continental, and by mixing up their operations in an ingenious *hocus*, they would contrive to confuse the scent.

One single instance shows how cleverly the chief of the party could turn even an unexpected accident to profit. He had gone over to Paris, carrying with him a large sum of money—four or five thousand pounds—when an accident occurred on the Great Northern Railway, in which he was severely injured. To another this would have been a serious impediment, but the ingenious swindler turned it to profit. There was a flash of genius in this stroke. Bruised and battered, his head plastered over, he betook him to Messrs. Rothschild's bank, and begged of the manager to let him have one of his bills on London for 4500*l.* This was of course declined. To hold a Rothschild bill was a proof of commercial standing of the highest kind, and it was only the aristocracy of finance who were thus privileged. Thus rebuffed the applicant complained bitterly of his injuries, and said he would return. Baron Alphonse de Rothschild was a director of the railway, and as he happened to come into the office, Bidwell repeated his complaint; "See," he cried, "the way I have been knocked about on your line, and you won't do this for me!" The baron relented, said he was sorry for him, and agreed to do what was desired. A few days later the swindler entered the Bank of England office, and throwing down the bill on the counter, said with a natural flourish, "Here, I suppose *that* paper is good enough for you!" It was assumed that this bill had come over to him in due course of

business—a man who had such dealings was “sound.” The ground being thus prepared, about the middle of January it was determined to strike. With a view to avoid inconvenient questions or pursuit in case of discoveries, the firm was obliged to go to the country, to their Pullman car factory at Birmingham. From Birmingham Bidwell now began to shower his forged bills on the bank. His business had extended enormously. The confiding manager by each day’s post received bills for two, three, and four thousand pounds, which were discounted and their proceeds placed to the credit of the firm. But there was no suspicion. More than *one hundred thousand pounds* were thus paid.

Not disturbed in the least by this influx of paper, the bank continued to receive the bills, duly discounting them. With each batch came plausible letters from Bidwell, describing his business success, &c. At this moment he and his partners were judiciously dispersed to various quarters, ready on receipt of the booty to fly. But unluckily two out of the numerous bills attracted notice as being irregular. The acceptor’s name had been forgotten. Still there was not much suspicion, it might be an accident. But an inquiry was made; then all came out, and one of the most daring and elaborate specimens of forgery was revealed. We may fancy the terror of the bamboozled Colonel Francis and the agonies he must have suffered as every

moment news was brought him of some new bill being found spurious. The money was gone. As it had been lodged by the confiding bank to their account, it had been drawn out by cheque and thus transferred to the Continental Bank. The swindlers on discovering that their plan was "blown" upon, as it is called, fled, some getting away beyond the seas; but rewards were offered and all four were captured. One was discovered at an obscure Scotch country town, where a policeman, seeing him walking in a garden, took it into his head that there was something suspicious about him, and laid hold of him. At the trial, two of the swindlers, Macdonnell and George Bidwell, begged to be allowed to address the jury. The first said that so far as he was concerned the evidence was conclusive, but he wished to shield others who were innocent. He with his friends had come to this country with the purpose of carrying on business in a legitimate way, but when they arrived and found the way bills were negotiated—no inquiry being made as to the acceptor (which was the mode in America)—why it became an absolute invitation, and the temptation irresistible, "and the result of that discovery," added the impudent fellow in a tone of pathos "is that I am standing here!" He then put in a plea for Bidwell, which he owned "cut the ground from under his own feet." This was the accident on the French railway which had given a tremendous shock to his friend, not

only physically but morally. It had opened his eyes to his sinful course, and from that moment he had withdrawn from the confederacy, and had become regenerate! The same effrontery was shown when a verdict of "Guilty" was brought in. Austin Bidwell, asking would it be any use to apply for a short postponement, and being told "None whatever," he folded his arms, and repeated melodramatically and with a sort of calm despair—"None whatever!" Then he proceeded to dwell on his mis-spent youth, perverted talents, lost opportunities, and apologized in feeling terms to the bank manager, hoping that time would soften any feelings he might have towards him. The judge in sentencing them, worthily described their scheme as "a fraud which for its audacity of conception, its magnitude, and the skill with which it was carried out, is completely unparalleled," and then proceeded to sentence them each to penal servitude for life. At the severity of this stroke the four men seemed to shrink away appalled.

Even at this stage they had not exhausted their resources of ingenuity. It was discovered that some of their relatives had arrived in town and that a bold plot had been contrived for their release, which had nearly succeeded. Three warders who were to be on duty on a certain night, had been bribed with a hundred pounds a-piece.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### DE TOURVILLE'S CASE.

THERE is a peculiar class of cases which excite infinitely greater interest and affect the public more keenly than others. This may be described as those belonging to "domestic melodrama," where, under much that is genteel and unobtrusive, some villainy lurks, or is suspected. This strikes far more than scenes of actual violence, which hold no mystery. Such was the character of this De Tourville case, followed with extraordinary interest both in England and on the Continent, and which occurred in the year 1876.

This De Tourville appears to have been a good-looking French adventurer, the son of a notary from Valenciennes, who had *exploited* his gifts among Englishwomen with some success. He had married twice in England, and both the ladies had good fortunes. The Rev. Mr. Glynn, who was a curate in Liverpool, once met him at a Scarborough hotel, when he uttered a very singular speech. He declared that "he knew of some infallible methods for disposing of

a mother-in-law or a wife." For the first, you were to show her the mechanism of a revolver; the weapon would probably go off, by accident. The wife was to be taken up some high mountain in Switzerland or the Tyrol, and there would be likely enough to miss her footing. These strange recipes naturally dwelt in the curate's mind, and he, of course, recalled them many years later, though at an awkward moment for De Tourville.

The second Mrs. De Tourville had a fortune of no less than 35,000*l.*, which she was not inclined to place at her husband's disposition. It was said, indeed, that all he was likely to receive in case of her death was a sum of 10,000*l.* The rest she intended for relatives. In July, 1876, we find them travelling in the Tyrol, exploring the beauties of the Stelvio Pass. They had hired a carriage in the Botzen district, which was to take them to Traigenhoe, and set out about nine in the morning. After driving until two o'clock, De Tourville sent away the carriage and set off with his wife walking. About half-past five he returned alone, carrying her parasol, which had lost its top, in his hand. All noticed his cool and indifferent air. The lady had met with an accident. She was admiring the view, insisted on going on to a dangerous declivity, when a stone had given way under her foot, and she had fallen. The carriage and some of the villagers returned to look for her. Strange

to say he could not find the spot, but it was near, he said, to some "red stones." At last he pointed out the place, and they went down to look. But he waited in the carriage. They found the unfortunate lady at the bottom of the precipice among the stones, all covered with blood, her legs crushed, her forehead wounded, and what were articles of her dress—her hat, pocket-handkerchief—scattered about, and covered with blood. When they came up to tell him she was dead, he replied, "*Dead indeed!*" and offered them 200 florins to carry up her body, but it was against the law to touch it until some authority had seen it. When he returned, his story at the inn to the gendarmes—already suspicious—was that she was very "self-willed," would go forward in spite of warning, and had "high heels;" she slipped and fell, but not many feet. He tried to reach her but could not, and so came back for help. His story was changed when the gendarmes detained him. In his absence she had committed suicide. So plausibly did he put forward his account of the matter, and he furnished some evidence to prove that she was in terror of having to appear in some divorce case in London, that the simple-minded authorities of Botzen allowed him to depart.

But almost at once some evidence was sent over from England, which made the case highly suspicious. His mother-in-law, Mrs. Brigham, had met with her



death in a singular way. He had been showing the mechanism of his revolver, when it went off, killing her on the spot. The Liverpool curate now recalled the extraordinary *modus operandi* which had been communicated to him at Scarborough, and had been so strangely carried out in both cases. Struck with this fulfilment he wrote to the authorities, and it was later proved by the hotel books that De Tourville had been there at the time he named. There was a story, too, of a fire in London, in which he and his son had been nearly burnt; but it was explained on his behalf that he had rescued the child.

The Austrian authorities having investigated the matter, demanded his extradition. This was stoutly resisted by Mr. Newton at Bow Street, who insisted on hearing the whole case. De Tourville, however, was finally handed over to the Austrian courts, and the trial of this remarkable case began. It excited attention over the world, and the little town of Botzen, where it was held, was crowded with reporters from all the capitals. It began on June 18th, 1877, the preliminaries having thus occupied over six months in preparation. It continued for fourteen days, being interrupted to allow the jury to visit the spot of the supposed murder, when measurements and calculations of time and distance were made. On July 2nd a verdict was found that the prisoner, who delivered himself in a curious polyglot, passing from

French to Italian, had committed the murder, and he was sentenced to be hanged. His appeal was rejected, but there was much discussion as to points of jurisprudence. In the end the prisoner's life was spared.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### “ THE SLATE TRICK.”

IN 1876 there was given at Bow Street a performance of an almost farcical kind, which drew large audiences for days, and seemed to revive the old time of that “child of Momus,” Sir Richard Birnie, Knt. The little theatre was crowded to suffocation; ladies brought camp-stools, distinguished persons were “accommodated with seats on the bench,” and roars of laughter re-echoed through the court. Mr. George Lewis—since become more celebrated—performed, so did Professor Maskelyne (of “Maskelyne and Cook”), “properties” were exhibited—in short for a week and more, the stock of harmless public pleasure was increased through the agency of some thirty reporters, huddled into the precincts, and who, at the close, returned thanks to the kindly court-keeper who found them places. This was, in short, the still remembered case of the so-called or self-styled “Dr.” Slade, the American “medium,” professor, and spiritualist, which caused an excitement that now seems ridiculous.

This person had taken two rooms at No. 8, Upper

Bedford Place, where, with the assistance of an agent, he displayed his mysteries—the chief of which was a direct communication with the unseen world. For the sum of a guinea he would put any visitor in relation with deceased friends, through the help of one “Allie,” Slade’s deceased wife. The communications were made on a slate. Many dupes came and went, the more credulous being much impressed and more than satisfied. A shrewd London professor, Mr. E. Ray Lankester, resenting what he thought was an imposture on science, with a friend, Mr. Donkin, determined to visit “the doctor” and if possible expose him.

When they arrived they were shown into an outer apartment where there were a few persons waiting. Here they were received by one Simmons, the doctor’s aid-de-camp, whose duty it was to while away the time in easy conversation, thus, it was insinuated, drawing out facts or allusions which might be useful to the chief performer at his interviews. When their turn came the two visitors found themselves in presence of a fluent gentleman, seated with his back to the windows, and at a curiously-constructed table. There was first some general conversation, and the two friends seem to have acted their part very cleverly, simulating interest, credulity, and astonishment. Slade explained that the spirit which was ready to operate was that of “Allie.” When all was ready the mani-

festations began, the doctor saying solemnly, “The spirit is now present!” When a question was put about a deceased friend, the doctor held a slate in a mysterious way half under the table. They heard a sort of scratching as from a pencil writing, but they affected not to hear it; and a written answer was thus produced from “Allie,” who acted as the intermediary of one “Samuel Lankester.” It proved that there was a mistake in the Christian name, which was “Edwin,” and the doctor cheerfully had it substituted. Then other operations were performed, such as raising a chair a little way from the ground; the table was lifted, as they distinctly saw, by the agency of the doctor’s knee or leg. “I expressed,” says Mr. Lankester, “great admiration at all I saw.” Then they experienced some slight kicks and touches. He noted that when the scratching on the slate was proceeding the doctor always became afflicted with a sort of grating noise in his throat—a curious sound intended to cover the other sounds. During these operations the two visitors became convinced of the imposture, it was carried out so clumsily. Finding the moment arrived, they put other questions as to the late Edwin. And as the doctor took up his slate, it was violently snatched from him—lo! already written on it by the slate-pencil were the words—

“I AM GLAD TO MEET YOU, EDWIN LANKESTER!”

“You scoundrel and impostor!” exclaimed the indig-

nant Lankester, the other calling him “a d——d rogue,” or words to that effect. Slade was so dumb-founded that he was seen to turn ghastly pale, and sat there looking at them without being able to articulate a word. The two left him there, and came out into the other room, informing the expectant gulls of all that had occurred. The ready Simmons smiled. He said it would “only do them good.” It had happened before, but *they had all come back again*. There was truth and a knowledge of human nature in this remark—as a fact, the exhibitions went on after this fiasco. Meanwhile other inquirers came to investigate, among them, Mr. R. Hutton, the editor of the *Spectator*, and Mr. Walter Pollock, of the *Saturday Review*. Mr. Hutton played the innocent inquirer with happy effect. On one occasion he brought with him a “locked slate,” and pleaded earnestly that this satisfactory mode of testing the matter should be adopted, but Dr. Slade, *contra*, explained that really such devices were used only by prejudiced experimenters, who brought chemicals, &c.; so that she—the spirit Allie—had come to the resolution “never to have anything to do with such things.” Mr. Hutton, with a touch of humour, pleaded that this resolution possibly did not commit the *other* spirits, “they might be so good as to do it for him.” Slade goodnaturedly yielded so far as to consult “Allie” on the point, who answered firmly, “*Not one word*,” on which Mr. Hutton

resignedly accepted the situation, saying “it was a disappointment.”

During the progress of the case before Mr. Flowers, the entertainment, as we have said, assumed the most amusing, not to say farcical character. Mr. George Lewis conducted the prosecution, which was of a rather serious character in its issues, as the doctor was accused of having “with certain subtle means, craft, and devices, attempted to deceive and impose upon certain of her Majesty’s subjects, to wit,” Lankester, Sidgwick, Hutton, &c. In the court there was exhibited the actual table, which was curiously constructed, having a sort of concealed lever underneath, which was cunningly contrived, and would support or fix the slate, leaving the operator’s hand free to write. But the fun became fast and furious when Mr. Maskelyne, of “Maskelyne and Cook,” appeared in the box and proposed to perform feats of the same kind and quite as effectively. In vain the magistrate interposed to prevent the exhibition; the performer calmly went on, knowing that he had his audience with him. By the agency of chemicals he was enabled totally to obscure the writing on a slate for a few moments, but the characters re-appeared by-and-by, the operator being thus able to display a slate blank at first, &c. He explained the device of the “thimble pencil,” which fitted on the top of a finger, and thus performed its office. There were, as in Mr.

Crummles' case, "cheers, tears, and laughter," roars indeed of the latter. Mr. Massey appeared as a sort of counsel, and identified himself with his client, at one period laying down his official garb to enter the witness-box. He had paid the doctor, he said, seven pounds, and was "satisfied with what he got for his money." On one occasion he had brought with him two slates bound together with cords, a pencil between them, and on loosing the cords, lo! there was writing! Other witnesses deposed to similar incidents, and expressed their faith in the doctor. So the case proceeded for many days and became what is called "the talk of the town," and there have been innumerable "talks of the town." At last, on November 30th, 1876, Mr. Flowers gave his decision, which was "that an offence had been committed against the Vagrancy Act, and that the professor must go to jail for three months with hard labour"—a sentence which was appealed against.

Such was this extraordinary scene, or series of scenes, and these frivolities for many days engrossed the attention of London.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE DYNAMITERS.

#### § *The Explosions.*

THE Bow Street Office has always offered curious contrasts, farce alternating with tragedy. It was now to witness a series of grim incidents, novel in their atrocity and imported from foreign countries. Londoners who had read with curiosity and horror of the desperate acts of the Nihilists, were now to find, to their consternation, that such villainies were being contrived in their midst.

The years 1883 and 1884 might be considered a period during which a new form of crime, newly introduced from America, was being systematically practised in this country. These may be called the great dynamite years. This shameful and barbarous mode of attack was organized by a succession of conspirators who came over provided with abundant funds, but who happily lacked the intrepid spirit necessary to secure success. By some lucky chances and a Providential interposition, all their attempts failed, little mischief was done, and what is a particular

subject of congratulation, nearly all the conspirators were captured and brought to justice.

It is curious to find how the cowardice of the assailants prompted them, at the opening of the campaign, as they would have styled it, to make some feeble, half-hearted attempts—such was the depositing of some dynamite on the window-sill of the Government offices in Charles Street, Whitehall, and which exploded, blowing away a portion of the solid stone walls. This was in the month of March, 1883, and excited a good deal of alarm. After an interval of a few months, in the October of the same year, a more daring attempt was planned. The conspirators turned their thoughts to the underground railways of the Metropolis, which from the darkened and subterranean course offered favourable opportunities. There was something particularly base and cruel in their selection, as the victims were certain to be of the innocent class. In October of the same year a tremendous explosion took place on the Metropolitan line, by which a couple of carriages were shattered and nearly sixty persons were injured. The conspirators, it was assumed, had thrown their explosive from the window, but no clue to the perpetrators of the outrage could be obtained at the time.

Three months more passed over, and again was the public to be startled. On February 25th, when all the district about Victoria Station was taking its rest

a terrific explosion took place, and those who rushed to see, found the wooden building which had for so many years done duty as offices for the Brighton Railway, a complete wreck—the roof blown away, the walls shattered, altogether a most melancholy picture of destruction. The explosion, it was found, had taken place in the luggage-room, and had been caused by one of those artful contrivances which had not long before figured as a dramatic element in one of the Drury Lane pieces, namely the clockwork detonator—set to go off at a particular moment. At other leading stations similar attempts had been made, but the machinery had happily failed to work. Here again no clue was obtained, though detectives had nearly been successful. It was found that two strangers with suspicious black portmanteaus of American make, had quitted an hotel in Great Portland Street the evening before. They departed in separate cabs and their portmanteaus corresponded with the description of them left at the stations. The next incident was the arrest in April, 1884, of a desperate character named Daley, at Birkenhead, on whom was found two phials of an explosive mixture, and no less than five clockwork machines. This man was known to be the most daring spirit of the dynamite gang, and is at the present moment suffering a long sentence of penal servitude for his offence.

Finally, in the December of the same year took

place the attempt on London Bridge, which happily miscarried. Three men had engaged a boat, and their plan was to place a charge of dynamite in one of the deep recesses left in the base of the piers. By an extraordinary chance these had been grated over not very long before. Thus foiled, the three men contrived to lower from the parapet of the bridge—close to the second arch from the Surrey side—a large packet of dynamite with a time-fuse attached. A tremendous explosion followed with much smoke, but as the dynamite had been unconfined little damage was done, though the wooden balks round the piers were started. Such were these preparatory experiments where the success was not encouraging. It would seem that new and more daring agents were despatched, who were required to run greater risks and do something more deadly and effective for their wage.

### § *The Gallaghers.*

Near to the bottom of Southampton Street, Strand, at the top of which is Garrick's old house—on the right, and within a door or two of Spooner's printshop, is a narrow, dingy-looking house, which a few years ago was an obscure hotel, known as the "Beaufort." One night there arrived in a cab a man of American aspect, who brought with him a heavy trunk which was carried upstairs to his room. Not many hours later the police came and

took him and his trunk away. The latter contained an extraordinary article—a pair of indiarubber fishing-boots, more than half filled with nitro-glycerine—a dangerous cargo, and we may be sure the police were cautious enough. To this hour one can never pass that mysterious-looking house without recalling the curious incident. The man thus arrested proved to be the inferior agent of a villainous gang which had come specially from America to carry out its schemes. His name was Norman, or Lynch. He had been living in New York, working to support his mother and sisters, when “a friend” (so-called) brought him off one night and had him enrolled in one of the innumerable secret societies of the city—the “Esperanza,” “Michael Davitt,” “Emerald,” &c. There he had to take an oath to perform any duty laid upon him, and learned the passwords, &c. One day he received a summons from a Dr. Gallagher who lived at Brooklyn. He obeyed in a sort of helpless way, and was told by the doctor that he must go to London at once. He must “knock off” work that very day. The man urged that his mother and sister depended on him—no matter, they would be taken care of. There was here something of the mysterious force of the *Vehmgericht* in this provision, and this carelessness as to expense. Gallagher informed him further that he himself was embarking almost at the same time, and bade him, on his arrival, call on him at the Charing Cross Hotel.

The emissary embarked at once, and arrived in London, where he found Gallagher. He described a strange walk he had with his principal, in which they passed by the various public buildings. As they came to the House of Commons, Gallagher pointed out what a scene of destruction it would presently exhibit; another building "would go down also," &c.—a truly original way of "showing the Lions" to his friend.

After a few days had passed by, Norman was sent down to Birmingham to procure what was called "the material." Here there lived a man called Whitehead, who was engaged in manufacturing nitro-glycerine on a considerable scale. It is astonishing to find what an amount of folly or vanity existed among these conspirators, for the attempt to blow up the gas-works at Glasgow was only recent, and the police everywhere were on the watch. This carelessness or indifference no doubt came of the vanity of belonging to a society or "school," as it was termed, which was possessed of plenty of money, and some influence and power. Whitehead, however, pursued his operations and continued to fill "carboys" with the fatal mixture.

Gallagher now directed his visitor to go and purchase a suitable and convenient receptacle for the nitro-glycerine, and thus was procured the pair of indiarubber fishing-boots, in which was stored some sixty pounds or so of the compound. A Birmingham

police sergeant, had, however, been carefully looking after Whitehead and his factory, and took an ingenious method to satisfy himself. In the disguise of a painter—carrying brushes, &c.—he called at the place, and while making inquiries, made excellent use of his eyes, noting particularly that the owner's fingers were stained as if with some acid. More than satisfied, he and some of his companions paid a visit in the middle of the night, entering by means of skeleton keys, and after a minute examination found enough to justify all their suspicions, with the result that Whitehead was arrested, tried, and convicted.

Norman (or Lynch) returned to London with his dangerous cargo, took a cab at Euston, and repaired, as we have seen, to the hotel in Southampton Street, where he was arrested the same night. Thus the whole plot "blew up." Dr. Gallagher, who was so quietly arranging his plans for "bringing down" London at his hotel, was promptly seized and conveyed to prison, with his brother Bernard and some others of the conspirators. It must have been a disagreeable moment for him, when brought to the bar, to find that his agent was not standing beside him; but his anxiety was soon relieved, for the bearer of the fishing-boots made his way into the witness-box and told the story that has just been related. This is, of course, the invariable procedure, and the last act of such conspiracies is the appearance of the informer. Trial

followed in due course, and the whole party are at this moment working out a long sentence of penal servitude.

It is gratifying to think that in frustrating the many attempts at contriving explosions in London, the authorities have been so completely successful. The difficulties in such a contest are enormous, as the stroke has to be anticipated. At this moment there are over a score of these wretches in English jails, paying the penalty of their infamous and cruel plots.

§ *Burton and Cunningham.*

The explosion which had taken place on the Metropolitan line at Farringdon Street had been long forgotten, and it had been found impossible to trace the agents. But they were now, nearly a year later, to be discovered in a most singular way, through the aid of further villainies of the same kind. Not long after had followed the daring outrage in the crypt of Westminster Hall, memorable, too, for the courage and promptitude displayed by Constable Cole and his companion. A lady had noticed something smoking on the ground and emitting mephitic fumes. "I think," she said to the officer, "one of your mats is on fire!" But it proved to be a parcel of dynamite. Cole instantly seized it and carried it away, but he noted a strange sticky stuff exuding,—yellowish, 'like cheese,' he said. It struck him that there was



something "uncanny" about it, and he flung it away. Then followed the explosion, by which the two officers were seriously injured. These attempts, it was clear, were from the same hand or agency. But the conspirators, encouraged no doubt by this continued impunity, had now prepared a yet bolder *coup*.

On January 24th a most daring outrage was planned. It was a Saturday, which was a free day at the Tower, and a number of "half-holiday" folk were as usual wandering through the rooms, looking at the armour, &c., when a boy noticed something smoking on the ground, which he took to be a fusee which some one had thrown away. Of a sudden a tremendous explosion took place, a young woman was thrown down by the concussion, and the whole room filled with a dense, stifling smoke. A large hole was knocked in the floor, which was found to be on fire, and burnt for some twenty minutes. It spoke well for the discipline of the place, that within *four* minutes an order was given to close the gates, and not one of the visitors was able to leave the precincts. All were then interrogated, their names and addresses taken. These accounts proved to be satisfactory, except in the case of a single man—who gave a confused story of his address and occupation—which excited the suspicions of the police. It turned out that this was a man called Cunningham, or Dalton, or Gilbert, for he passed by all these names, and who had been living

at Great Scarborough Street, near the Minories, without any apparent occupation—an “Irish-American,” who had arrived in November last and had taken a lodging in Prescott Street, close to the Tower. He had brought with him a huge American trunk, which after a few days had been taken away by another man and an ordinary black box substituted. Without giving a reason, he had suddenly left his quarters, and moved to an adjoining street. Later on, when he was brought to Bow Street, and on his second appearance, another man was placed beside him. His name was Burton, and it turned out that it was he who had called for the trunk. By a curious fatality he had actually taken a room in a house where a policeman lodged, whose attention was speedily drawn to his proceedings. Notice was given to Scotland Yard, and a “plain-clothes” officer was specially appointed to watch him and his movements. It will thus be seen that it becomes rather difficult for the enterprising Irish-American who arrives in this country to escape attracting notice or to sink his individuality, even if he plunge into the obscure district of the Minories.

As it was, without evidence of any kind—the detective instinct or *flaire* at once pointed out these fellows as being in some way connected with the recent atrocities. It may be said at once, that by a wonderful bit of luck they were actually watching the very men—the authors and contrivers of another series

of explosions. But no one could ever have expected that satisfactory proof, &c., would have accumulated, of the most convincing kind. It was found that the two men had arrived in England in the same month, and that they had made several journeys backwards and forwards. It is well known how difficult it is to recall a face seen in the train, in the street, or in a shop; or how puzzling it is, some weeks afterwards, to be asked to say "is *that* the person?" Here, however, a perfect flood of identification was furnished. On the night of the explosions on the railway, one Myers, an auctioneer, recollected, as the train was crowded, that he tried to enter a break-van. But three men were in possession, and one was at the window, his head out, and leaning on the door: "You can't come in," said the fellow. "Why not?" asked the other. "*Because you can't,*" was the impudent reply. On being shown one of the accused, he at once called out, "*That is the man!*" who had refused to let him enter. This was a curious retribution for unpoliteness, and the "cheeky" American Irishman little dreamed that when he was so complaisantly refusing the stranger, he was actually imprinting a vivid image of his own features on the man's memory. A porter at the station also recognized them as the men in the brake-van, others saw the pair crossing the railway, and it was all but clear that it was from the brake-van the dynamite had been dropped. A policeman also recalled them. A search

was of course made at their lodgings, and, awkwardly enough, a detonating cap was found in Cunningham's box. Burton, too, was presently found to have been connected with one of the railway explosions, owing to a coat with curious buttons, which he was in the habit of wearing, and which was found in one of the portmanteaus deposited in the luggage depôt.

While this examination was going on at Bow Street, the police discovered that there was in existence a regular dynamite gang, whereof Burton was the actual director. Great precautions were taken against any desperate attempts at a rescue, and every day the "Black Maria" was escorted by a band of police armed to the teeth. There could, indeed, be no reasonable doubt that these ruffians had contrived all these explosions. Plans of London were found among their things, and also a "*Guide to the Tower.*"

They were duly committed for trial. That trial took place in May. Burton begged to be allowed to address the court, when he put forward a lame enough story that "he was entirely ignorant of any attempt against her Majesty, for whom they had all a great respect." But this plea did not avail, and they were convicted.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE NEW POLICE.

“WE are not by any means devout believers,” wrote Mr. Dickens in one of his interesting detective papers, “in the old Bow Street Police. To say the truth, we think there was a vast amount of humbug about those worthies. Apart from many of them being men of very indifferent character, and far too much in the habit of consorting with thieves and the like, they never lost a public occasion of jobbing and trading in mystery and making the most of themselves. Continually puffed, besides, by incompetent magistrates, anxious to conceal their own deficiencies, and hand-in-glove with the penny-a-liners of that time, they became a sort of superstition. Although as a preventive police they were utterly inefficient, and as a Detective police were very loose and uncertain in their operations, they remain, with some people, a superstition to the present day. On the other hand, the Detective force, organized since the establishment of the existing police, is so well chosen and trained, proceeds so systematically and quietly, does its business in so workmanlike a

manner, and is always so calmly and steadily engaged in the service of the public, that the public really do not know enough of it to know a tithe of its usefulness " Our author then, in his own graphic style, proceeds to recount an evening at the *Household Words Office*, when the leading detectives assembled and related adventures drawn from their own recollections. Dickens was very partial to this well-trained body, and perhaps invested them with a good many of the gifts which he denied to the old functionaries; but it will be admitted, from the incidents we have been following, that, considering the difficulties in their way, and the rude condition of detective science, on the whole they did their work well and were successful enough in their calling. At the same time it must be admitted that, during the decade of years previous to the establishment of the new police, the Bow Street officers had become demoralized, and even untrustworthy, and the more prominent "Runners," from their dealings with the thieves, had become more or less corrupted, and used rather to shield than detect.

In the year 1832 the City of London, which in virtue of its privileges had always been responsible for the safety of its citizens, established "a day police force" of its own, which consisted of 100 men; and including superior officers, such as marshals and marshals' men, &c., it amounted to 120. The upper marshal received a yearly salary of 540*l.*, the under 450*l.* Each

marshal's man had about 130*l.* a year, exclusive of fees for warrants and summonses.

In addition to the day police, the total number of watchmen and other persons employed in the City of London was, in 1833, of ordinary watchmen, 500; superintending watchmen, 65; patrolling watchmen, 91; and beadles, 54: total, 710. The number of men on duty at twelve o'clock at night was 380. The total expense in 1832, was 9006*l.* The sums ordered to be raised and levied for the night-watch, was, in 1827, 34,700*l.*; in 1833, 42,077*l.* Though still under the management of the different wards, the night-watch had latterly been greatly improved by the substitution of able young men for the aged and often decrepid creatures who were too often appointed out of charity.

In addition to this regular force there was a body of "Ward constables," who were called out by the Lord Mayor in emergencies and which could muster nearly 400 men. This was a fair attempt at organization, though of a straggling kind. When the tremendous and engrossing question of emancipation had been disposed of, Mr. Peel addressed himself to the entire reform of the Police of the Metropolis. This was loudly called for. Crime was increasing out of all proportion to population. In the year 1828, out of a population of about a million and a quarter, the committals were 3560. "Moreover the mechanical improvements in the country so aided the perpetrators of crime,

as to enable them to travel a great distance in a few hours." But the real cause, besides the immunity of offenders, was the multiplication of bodies that controlled such police as there was—so that there was no value in the protective or detective measures taken.<sup>1</sup>

In this state of things, on April 25th, 1829, Mr. Peel introduced his measure, abolishing the old system and establishing a new board, who would have the power to tax the parish and raise a regular force. There was a wonderful simplicity in the plan, which he declared was an experiment, and was to be tried at first in ten parishes only. The constitution of the force is familiar to all—its hierarchy of Commissioners, Inspectors, Serjeants, &c. Almost at once the machinery worked smoothly, and the system, in a short time, was extended all over the kingdom.

The new force was for some years highly unpopular. The first step had been the dismissal of all the old "runners," making a "clean sweep," as it is called, of these antiquated servants. Some were driven to the workhouse, others came before the magistrates and

<sup>1</sup> In the Hackney Parish, it was found that there were no less than eighteen different Watch Boards, or "trusts," all independent of each other; while in Lambeth there was no night-watch at all. Kennington—a wealthy and populous district, fifteen miles in extent—was protected by three constables and three head-boroughs; who were found to be "not very remarkable for their abstinence from liquor," and were moreover appointed by the Steward of the Manor. Most of the suburban districts, such as Wandsworth, Chiswick, did without police or watchmen, while in a town of such population and importance as Deptford there was no lighting, and only two constables!



iterated the hardships of their situation. This seemed a harsh proceeding, but in such cases it is found impossible to work an entirely new system with the old instruments. Unluckily, some of the new men had been selected carelessly, and a few "black sheep" had got in. The newspapers found satisfaction in reporting cases in which they figured with such headings as "*The New Police again,*" "*Nice conduct of the Police.*"

The worthy Sir Richard Birnie, now old-fashioned enough after long service under the exploded system, did not regard the body with favour. When a policeman arrested a gentleman's footman for misconduct at Covent Garden Theatre, this dialogue took place:—

*The footman* : You threatened to take the coachman also, and have the carriage taken to the Green-yard."

*Sir R. Birnie* : "Of course; and leave your master and his family to get home how they could—very pretty, indeed."

The officer stated, that in what he did he acted under the instructions of the Commissioners. Then said Sir Richard: "The fact is, the new policemen have such ridiculous instructions given to them by their superiors, who know nothing whatever of the duties of a police officer, that they are not half so much to blame on these occasions as their superiors."

Sir Richard must have been yet more gratified, when no less than ten discharged officers waited on him with their complaints. Upson, we are told, advanced and addressed him:—

“Sir R. Birnie, having been for a number of years connected with this establishment, and having, as I trust, on all occasions, conducted myself with the strictest propriety, it is with great pain that I now appear before you; but I could not quit the office without expressing to you, on behalf of myself and my brother officers who are with me, our most grateful thanks for the many kindnesses we have received from you and the other magistrates of this office.”

*Sir R. Birnie*: “What, what! are you discharged, Upson?”

*Upson*: “Yes, Sir Richard, myself and nine others, without receiving a moment’s notice, have this morning been discharged, and no fault has been alleged.”

*Sir R. Birnie*: “You did not join the new Police, I suppose?”

*Upson*: “We did not; we declined.”

*Sir R. Birnie*: “I am surprised at your discharge; I know that you have been a most vigilant and active officer, and that you have been repeatedly engaged on confidential public service.”

Sir Richard was informed that Upson was engaged in the apprehension of Thurtell and Probert, and in many other cases where his ability and courage were put to the test.

*Sir R. Birnie*: “I know many instances of his active and praiseworthy conduct; and I regret that I have no power to serve him.”

*Upson*: “I have repeatedly received the thanks of the magistrates of this office, and of the magistrates

of various counties for my exertions in bringing criminals to justice; and I beg to say that I do not so much complain of the consequences that may ensue to me by being thrown out of a situation which I have so long held, as I do of the manner in which it has been done. I was actually going on duty when the discharge was put into my hands. I am sent about my business at a moment's notice."

Steggles, one of the officers, said that he and Upson belonged to the old patrol, whose district was in Surrey. The new police had not yet been appointed on that district, yet he and Upson had been discharged from the party to which they had belonged, and in their places persons quite inexperienced in police matters had been appointed.

Sir R. Birnie again stated that he could not help what had taken place, and he very much lamented their unfortunate situation.

These cases of hardship, however, were soon forgotten in the inestimable advantages derived from the services of the new force.

As we have seen during an entire century, magistrates, police, public, and prisoners, were content to accept the miserable and straitened "little ease" of the old Bow Street office with a resigned toleration. It is wonderful to think how the business was transacted under such conditions, but whether the case were of a pretentious, sensational kind, or of the smallest description, the accommodation seemed to fit itself to

the occasion with a Procrustean facility. It was owing to Sir Thomas Henry's energetic and persistent exertions that the government was at last induced to take up the matter seriously. In due course of time the houses were bought, the ground cleared, and plans furnished by Mr. Taylor of the Board of Works. Nearly half an acre of ground was covered by the new buildings, which were laid out on the most spacious and roomy principles. There were two courts, each some forty feet long by thirty broad. There were separate approaches and stairs for the prisoners, and combined with the office was a barrack capable of housing 100 police. There was a great courtyard into which the prison van was driven, while a covered way led from the cells to the van, which was driven into the courtyard, the gates being closed behind it. Thus was the demoralizing spectacle of conveying the prisoners to the van in presence of an approving mob abolished for ever.

It was not until April 4th, 1881, as related in the first chapter of this work, that the doors of the old office were closed: while two days later, the spacious and imposing building opposite was opened for public business.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The last offender dealt with at the old office was a lad named Macarthy, charged with stealing firewood; and the first at the new office was an old woman, known as "Moll," charged with being drunk and disorderly.

THE END.



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