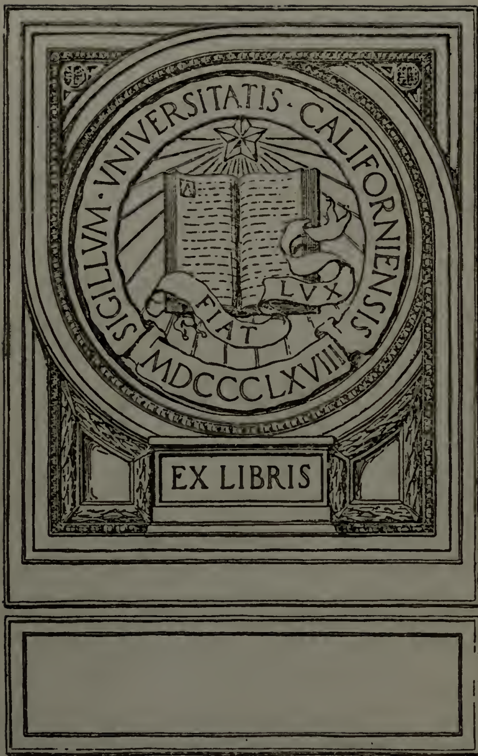
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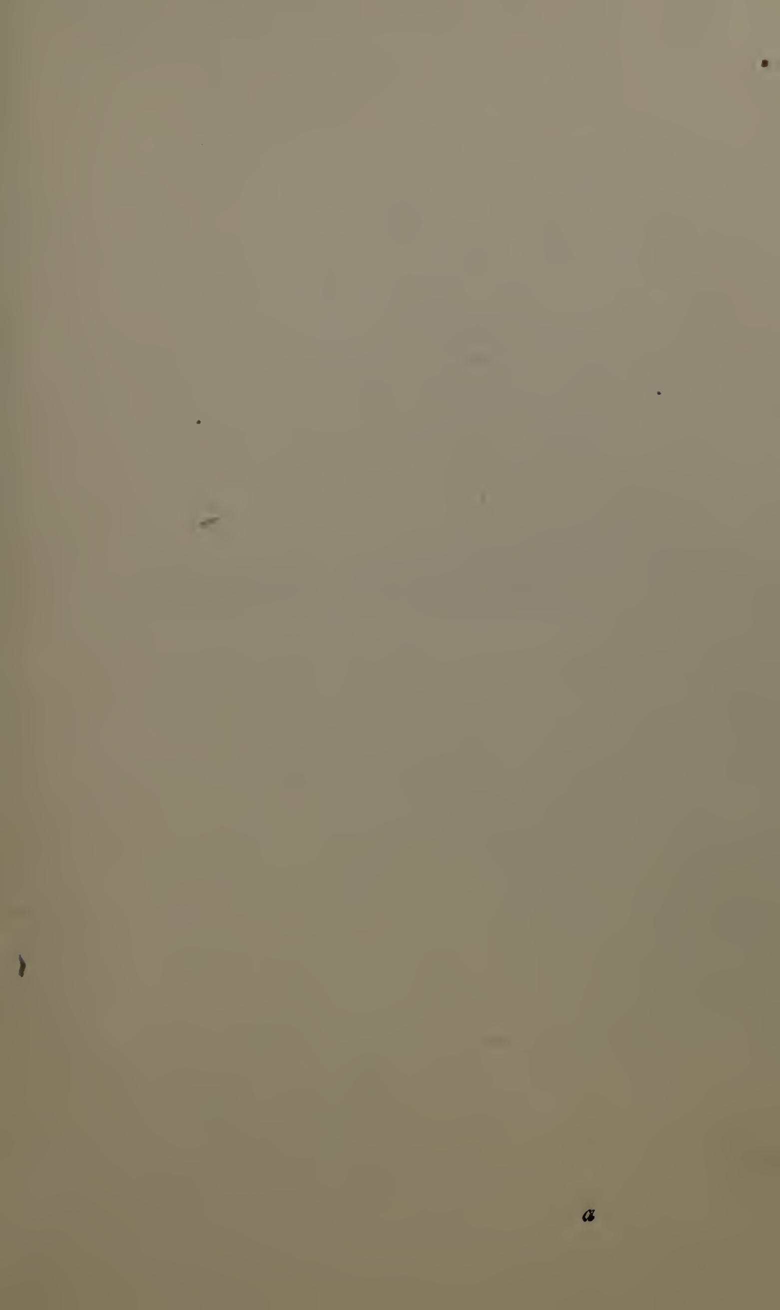

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

TRAVELS IN LONDON

BY THE LATE

CHARLES MORLEY

WITH RECOLLECTIONS BY

SIR EDWARD COOK, J. A. SPENDER

AND

J. P. COLLINS

WITH A PORTRAIT

LONDON

SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Charles Morley: A Memoir	3
Westminster Abbey Precincts	51
The Tower and its Treasures	94
A Relic of Roman London	120
Two City Companies	142
Charterhouse and the Poor Brothers	177
The Soane Museum	214
Behind the Scenes at Drury Lane	230
Appendix—"Moberly's"—and Rugby in the Late 'Sixties	267

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CHARLES MORLEY: A MEMOIR

WITH

RECOLLECTIONS BY SIR EDWARD COOK AND J. A. SPENDER

CHARLES MORLEY: A MEMOIR

I

It is given to few men to add anything worthy of an accepted classic like "Tom Brown's Schooldays." Judge Hughes brought to bear on it a rare combination of qualities, characterisation that was true to life, a love of scapegrace adventure, and the stamp of English manliness. After more than half a century of busy writing, the book remains unbeaten, and with a single exception, perhaps unapproached. That exception was a paper in *Cornhill* last year, which was worthy of the magazine's high traditions. Under the title "Moberly's and Rugby in the late 'Sixties," it revived clear memories of Big School and the grey old quad while they were still under a vigorous and time-honoured rule. Arnold had gone and Temple had

succeeded—Temple of the "all-controlling eye," and an "overhanging brow scarred by signs of many an inward battle." Whatever reforms there had been in detail, the frosty but kindly spirit of the place was still in force, and though it might be hard on the individual, the code was true to its objective type, and it undoubtedly bred men. That, in substance, was the verdict of one who was certainly not meant by nature for the rough-and-tumble usage of a public school, and who must often as a lad have questioned the providence that sent him there. As a matter of fact, several years at Rugby failed to cure him of a congenital shyness, and he carried to his grave an unconquerable reluctance to sign this tribute to a school he had learned to love.* Many old Rugbeians tried to draw aside the tantalising veil of anonymity, but their letters went unanswered, and the author kept his secret to himself. He was a man who as writer and editor had some influence on his generation, though his modesty would have

* The paper is reprinted as an appendix to this book.

disavowed it; and he brought to journalism gifts of insight and initiative which cannot be easily assessed even by those who had the honour to be his colleagues.

Charles Morley was born in 1853, the son of a Blackburn physician who in a remarkable family stood out by reason of his rugged and downright character and his hearty encouragement of open-air sports. It was possibly a certain impatience with the lad's sensitiveness that led Dr. Morley to enter him at Rugby at an earlier age than usual, and leave him there with a sovereign and a curt admonition. There has been an impression shared among a few friends that after Rugby and a course of general study at University College Charles entered Guy's Hospital in obedience to what was almost a family tradition, and left at the end of six months. But this belief is contradicted by his brother, Dr. E. J. Morley, and certainly finds no support in the hospital records. It has been well said that every medical man must sink in a great sympathy for the race his immediate

feelings for the individual, but Charles had both developed to an intensity almost beyond control, and the profession of medicine in which so many of his kindred had won distinction was not for him. In his native district he entered a cotton mill, and after three years of hard work rose to be departmental manager, but this experience of industrialism sufficed, and whenever in later life he referred to old-time factory conditions, it was usually with a shudder. On his own prompting he elected for the colonies at a time when they were comparatively untried ground. He proceeded to New Zealand in the spring of 1878 to assist in a survey of the north island, and worked ably and diligently, as appears from the testimonials he brought back. His diary for the three years is an unbroken record of journeying in fair weather and foul, by swamp and mountain, and under conditions that must have made exact calculation and technical routine extremely difficult. One thing deserves to be said, if only to show how his character was developing. This old

exercise-book, with its careful text and its few rough maps of river and section, is creditably free from any hint of home-sickness or murmurs against the hardships of pioneering. But these had told upon him, and this time the disability was physical, not psychological. He returned in the autumn of 1880, and he was still a Japhet in search of a calling.

The third attempt succeeded, and he was to reach the right reading at last. The New Zealand diary repeatedly refers to papers sent from home, and in every parcel were copies of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. This may have determined the lad's taste for journalism and his preferences therein, in days before he could have guessed the happy chance ahead. On the retirement of Frederick Greenwood in 1880 George Smith, the founder, passed the paper on to his son-in-law, Mr. Henry Yates Thompson, and they offered the editorship to Mr. John (now Lord) Morley. The new editor made nephew Charles his private secretary. It was one of the very few windfalls in the young

man's life, and old colleagues happily surviving, who had served the paper with distinction almost from the first, say the ex-colonist took to the new life with enthusiasm. He was the soul of discretion, says Mr. Henry Leslie, and just the handy man required in a room which was the resort of the best and most progressive intellects in London. Those were days when the Press had ceased to be merely a goad in politics ; it was entering more and more into the field of collaboration and suggestion, and inviting the public to join in the game. Where Greenwood had inspired a master-stroke of policy in the shape of the Suez Canal investment, it remained for his successor to enter day after day into the work of constructive Liberalism, with what results we know. All this was bound to have lasting influence on a receptive mind, and though the private secretary knew his limitations, he was compact of sympathy and energy, and there could be no standing aside for him when there was striving to be done. In 1883 Lord Morley entered Parlia-

ment, and Mr. Stead's succession to the editorship opened up new and exciting ground for his young coadjutor and journalism in general. By this time Charles Morley had fledged his pen as a writer and shown his mettle for description and inquiry, especially in those human phases of journalism which are all too drily labelled as sociology. What is more, in this new atmosphere of comradeship and almost reckless propaganda, he soon lost much of his old diffidence, and the friendships he made were deep and lasting. Here, however, there is first-hand evidence available from Stead's successor, Sir E. T. Cook, and those who have read Sir Edward's admirable biography of another *Pall Mall* associate, the late Edmund Garrett, will welcome these genial recollections from his pen. They are followed by valuable and vivid reminiscences from Mr. J. A. Spender, describing Morley's period on the *Westminster Gazette*, after the change of politics at the *Pall Mall* in 1893 had caused an exodus now famous in the annals of the Press.

II

(BY SIR EDWARD COOK)

"The old *Pall Mall*," as many of us in successive phases have called it, means a different thing to different people. Just as every member of a school or college thinks that the old place was never quite the same, or so excellent, as when he belonged to it, so in the case of a favourite paper the palmy days are held to have been those in which we ourselves had most to do with it. Charles Morley had a longer connexion with the *Pall Mall* than any living man—with the exception, possibly, of his old friend Henry Leslie ; he had served *Gazette* or *Budget* or *Magazine* under I know not how many dispensations ; and as he was the soul of loyalty, he would perhaps have been hard put to it to say which were *the* days of "the old *Pall Mall*" to him. He had a natural affinity in some respects to the journalism of Mr. Stead ; but I suspect that if he

had been driven to stand and deliver, he would have said that the great days of the paper were those in which it was edited by John Morley. A profound admiration, not unmixed with a certain pious awe, for the character, the views, the achievements of his illustrious uncle was an engaging feature in Charles Morley. I have never forgotten his version of the instructions he received as his uncle's secretary for answering a contributor who was teasing to know why some article had not appeared on a particular day or month. "Tell him—politely—," said the editor, "that the world is not waiting for his article, that it would continue to move if the article never appeared at all, and that the end of the world would not come even if the paper itself were never to appear again." Charles had forgotten, or at any rate did not say, how much of this wholesome wisdom survived in the answer actually sent. During the editorship of Lord Morley the *Pall Mall* had many distinguished contributors, and Charles learnt

much that was valuable to him in later days —such as who was the leading authority on this subject or on that, and what in each case was the likeliest avenue of approach. It must have been a varied as well as a valuable apprenticeship to have watched the collaboration, and heard the discussions, between two journalists so different in temperament and equipment as Lord Morley and his assistant-editor, Mr. Stead. Not that there was ever any doubt, I imagine, which was master in the house. In later days when Mr. Stead was in full and uncontrolled career, Charles used sometimes to recall how the lion was once tame.

It was when Mr. Stead had succeeded Lord Morley that I became closely acquainted with Charles. He had entered *con amore* into the methods of the newer journalism introduced into the British Press by Mr. Stead. Mr. Stead was in one sense of Lord Morley's school,—the editor's chair was to him a political pulpit ; but he was keenly interested in other parts of the performance. At a time

when he thought of everything in naval terms —(his famous and successful crusade for strengthening the Navy was then in full tide) —he used to put the case to us in this way: The thing that most mattered was the guns you carried, but the ship required also not only engines but various contrivances of iron and steel and painted wood. In the supply of the accessories Charles Morley was already an adept when I first knew him, and during the long years of our association his ingenuity, fertility, and resourcefulness never failed to impress me. The "new journalism" is now so widely prevalent and has become so much a matter of course that the pioneers are half-forgotten; but I am confident that if an intimate and well-informed history of British journalism during the 'eighties and 'nineties is ever written, Mr. Stead and his school will be recognised as the innovators. The idea was to enlarge the area of the daily newspaper, and to treat already recognised subjects with a freer and livelier touch. Charles was specially

concerned with books and pictures and theatres, and with that wide field which may be described as the life of the people. In all these things he took a real interest. He had popular sympathies, he was a competent judge of a picture or a play, he had a genuine taste for good literature; but he threw a veil of cynicism over it all, and ranged lightly in search or suggestion of "good copy."

When the late Lord Avebury propounded his list of the "Best Hundred Books," it was Charles Morley who first suggested that we should write to all the leading men of the day and invite their criticisms—a suggestion which resulted in a great "score." The most amusing answer came from Ruskin; the most important from Swinburne, who sent a careful list of his own. But to the journalistic sportsman the greatest catches are those which it is most difficult to land. Now, Mr. Chamberlain had been very close to the *Pall Mall* in the days of John Morley, but when Mr. Stead succeeded would have no truck with us. So the fly was

thrown over Princes' Gardens without much hope ; but on this occasion Mr. Chamberlain was caught : he could not resist the temptation of sending for publication the inquiry whether it was by accident or design that Sir John Lubbock had omitted the Bible from a list of the Best Books. Another, yet greater, catch was His future Majesty, Edward VII., who put in a claim on behalf of Dryden. Charles was very wicked when some of the replies came in. "Did I not tell you," he said, that "every one would like . . . ?" But I must not give away too many tricks of the trade.

It may suffice to add, in more general terms, that Charles was equally adept at bringing in not only actors and impresarios (who sometimes almost call to be caught), but also the shyer tribe of artists. It was he who started and developed the very popular "Pictures of the Year," which in its earlier issues included accounts of "Artists in their Studios." At one time Mr. Marion Spielmann was associated with Charles Morley in such work. Between

them, they often succeeded in "drawing" Whistler, who seldom let the newspaper dogs have the best of it, but who never sent anything to the papers that was not "good copy." There is much good copy in shops, and Charles used to extract it. As an instance in this sort, I recall an innocently amusing article on "Heads of the Mighty," which he wrote and illustrated from the records and models of a well-known hatter in the West End. In making the medical profession unconsciously supply amusing copy, he once carried his methods to the verge of permissible audacity. It was when the revival of influenza was a novelty, and everybody had a patent specific. A clever lady journalist who did much work for Charles, was instructed to pose as an influenza patient, and duly provided with the necessary guineas, she made a tour of the fashionable consulting-rooms—with what precise results it were unkind to recall; suffice it to say that the public were provided with a wide choice of specifics, that the town laughed

for a day or two, and that one of the consultants refused the fee, bidding the young lady to go away and fib no more. Of course no names were mentioned.

The most characteristic of Charles Morley's journalistic works is the old *Pall Mall Budget*, of which he was editor. There was nothing like it at the time, and there is nothing quite like it now. The daily papers, and the other weekly budgets made up from them, were not illustrated ; the illustrated weeklies relied more upon the excellence of their pictures than upon the diversity and comprehensiveness of their letterpress. Charles Morley's idea was to combine it all. His innovations have all been followed, and often been developed, in one place or another ; but for two reasons the old *Pall Mall Budget* has no counterpart to-day. One reason is that the great multiplication of papers has led to specialisation ; one specialises in pictures of pretty faces, another in tittle-tattle, and so forth. And then, secondly, the development of photographic reproduction for

newspaper purposes has altered the whole aspect of illustrated journalism. The old *Pall Mall Budget* was a summary of the week's news; it included the gist of the week's political gospel as preached during the week in the *Pall Mall Gazette;* it contained lively "middle articles"; its blocks were not independent pictures, but illustrations of the letterpress. They were mostly made from pen and ink work. Henry Austin, Warwick Goble, F. C. Gould, F. T. Jane (afterwards well-known as a naval expert), Hedley Fitton, W. Mills, Fred Pegram, Arthur Rackham, E. J. Sullivan, F. H. Townsend, Herbert Railton, Philip Pimlott, and George Thomson were amongst Charles Morley's illustrators, who included also "Cynicus" and "Stuff Gownsman."

I have so far spoken of my old friend as concerned only (as indeed in his professional work he was concerned mostly) with the lighter side of journalism. This was partly the result of circumstance, and partly of diffidence. He was in reality keenly interested in great literature

and in serious politics, and often, after an apologetic "I know nothing about it," would throw out a shrewd hint or penetrating judgment. As a descriptive writer, he had command of a nervous, impressionist style, which was the expression of a sensitive and impressionable nature. In some other respects the man and the journalist were in Charles Morley's case curiously different. Much of his journalistic work was light-hearted and gay; he himself was inclined to take sombre views, and his humour, though lively, was often mordant. Few men have dragged so many others into publicity as he, and as a journalistic *entrepreneur* he was pushful and audacious. Himself, he shrank not only from publicity and self-advertisement, but even from legitimate self-assertion. If there was something in this that verged upon the morbid, there were other aspects of it, and of his character generally, that commanded, as they deserved, the respect and affection of all who really knew him. He worked for the credit of his paper and in loyalty

to his chiefs always, for his own hand never. His veil of cynicism was a defence thrown over a warm and tender heart. He was the staunchest of friends, the most loyal and unselfish of colleagues, and it is in grateful and affectionate memory that I close this inadequate record of old *Pall Mall* days spent in his company.

E. T. C.

* * *

III

(BY J. A. SPENDER)

There are some men—even the best of friends—whom one wishes to keep at arm's length during the working day. But I can never remember a time when the appearance of Charles Morley at the door of my room was not a pleasure and a temptation. To let him stay, even to urge him to stay, though

the printer was crying aloud for copy, was irresistible. I can think of no better description of his talk than just that it was good for one. He brought a point of view which was whimsical, penetrating and detached. Though a journalist of the journalists, he yet escaped that peculiar infirmity which makes it impossible for most journalists to judge the newspaper they are producing as the reader judges it. His sympathies were with the reader and not with the writer. He did not scruple to say that a particular article or series of articles on which an editor specially prided himself was profoundly boring, and added a dozen good reasons why it ought to be and must be so to any intelligence not hopelessly sophisticated. Circumstances had thrown him among the "university tips," as he used to describe the academic gentlemen from Oxford and Cambridge, who had invaded the newspaper on which he was serving; and he seemed to have a special mission to tell them what the world was really like, and how much wisdom

and good sense there was in the despised judgment of common folk. Alone of the academics his famous uncle appeared to have made an impression on him which resisted criticism, and of him he used to say that he "knew a great many more things than people gave him credit for"—a very high compliment from Charles. He watched with unflagging interest the clash of temperament between Stead and the "university tips" who composed his staff at the old *Pall Mall*, and I doubt not cheered inwardly when that fervent man carried them headlong on the tide of his splendid indiscretions. From the editor to the office-boy, every one interested him, and he had an uncanny penetration into the motives and characters of the people among whom he worked. If the fancy had taken him to do it, no one could have written a better or more intricate study of newspaper life in recent years.

Charles Morley took little consecutive interest in politics, but he was a natural Radical and a complete democrat in character

and temperament. He adored Dickens, and was more Dickensian in his method than any journalist in our time. He wrote always by preference of the working class, but his special delight was the queer character whom he discovered in the slum or the Salvation Army shelter. Other men "make copy" of such subjects and evolve the details from their inner consciousness. Morley made an intense and affectionate study of them, and only when he had established an intimacy with his model, did he feel free to write. I remember well the infinity of pains that he took with the old burglar who appeared in a series of rather grim but intensely human studies in the *Westminster Gazette*. Again and again he went to visit the old gentleman, and often came back complaining that he had drawn blank. I like to picture them together, Morley trying seriously to comprehend the burglar point of view, to get to the bottom of it, to grasp the peculiar fascination which made a man willing to spend half his life in prison for its satisfaction, and

which left him at the end full of pleasurable memories and pride in his artistry, unquenched by the holier joy of having found salvation. They established in the end a perfect contact, and the result was a little masterpiece, which Morley, I remember, insisted was essentially a composite work, requiring a substantial fee for the burglar as well as the writer. He did much of this kind of work, and all of it with a conscientiousness which belongs—I am afraid it must be said—rather to the artist than to the journalist. It was the same with the simplest job that he undertook. He always produced something original, something personal, something which might have and probably did cost him hours of labour for an apparently small result. I could never ask him to do an ordinary piece of work without a feeling of reproach that so much skill should be spent on such everyday business, and the reward be so incommensurate to the labour. In the last months of his life I commissioned him to write a series of articles on the munitions works for

the *Westminster Gazette*, and he went about it with his usual seriousness and thoroughness, disdaining to write a line till he had explored acres of bewildering machinery and spent laborious nights as well as days in those crashing workshops. At the end it was the human interest that gripped him, and he wrote with touching enthusiasm of the labours of men and women—especially women—but he was determined to be right about the machines, and gave himself infinite trouble over the few sentences in which he threw in his background.

Admirable journalist as he was, his method was in all this the exact opposite of the journalistic. He wrote and re-wrote, tore up and began again, and even copied out his copy. He would spend days on producing a column and deliver it with a thousand apologies for its supposed shortcomings. If he had to do a thing quickly, he would do it, and do it extremely well, but to press him that way was to inflict suffering from which any humane editor must have shrunk. Let me add that he was an

excellent editor himself, and none surpassed him for the *Budgets* and weekly or monthly periodicals in which in old days the draughtsman had a chance. Men now famous as painters and designers got their first chance under Charles Morley, and he had a delightful ruthlessness in sacrificing the mere writer to their claims on space. It was a liberal education for a writer to see him cutting an article to fit a block. No one understood better the proper subordination of the rivulet of text which meanders about an illustrated page. Photography spoilt that line of business, and though he fell in with it perforce, he was always in rebellion against it. For it abolished or reduced to mere mechanism the particular thing which in his hands was a fine art—I mean the discovery and working-out *with* the draughtsman of the kind of subject which suited an individual talent.

With many differences one recognised a family likeness between Charles Morley and his uncle. Charles had the finely chiselled profile, and the admirably expressive voice with

the same habit of sudden emphasis that one knew in the uncle. He had also the same contempt for the shoddy and the plausible. He would do "tradesman's work," as he called the greater part of journalism, with rare fidelity provided it was so labelled and there was no nonsense about it, but what he lived for was the occasional opportunity of work in which he could express himself. That came too seldom, as his friends think, but his personality remains strong and vivid in my memory and I think of him as one of the most lovable and one of the most original men whom I have worked with in these years of journalism.

J. A. S.

* * *

IV

After the *Westminster* there succeeded a period on the *Daily News* during which Morley wrote the best-known of his descriptive pieces, "The Passing of Gladstone." But the chance of

returning to an old connexion, even under changed conditions, had its appeal for a man with Morley's fondness for old associations, and in the 'nineties he went to help Mr. G. R. Halkett with the *Pall Mall Magazine.* Morley always loved, as he said, a hearty colleague, and the new path thus opened up must have been entirely congenial. This periodical was the outcome of a laudable ambition, and at this time went further than any of its contemporaries in pursuit of its own high aims. But the point of interest for us is the renewal of an old personal friendship, and the fact that Morley's nature had mellowed. "I was on intimate terms with him," writes Mr. Halkett, "for twenty-three years. . . . He was a curiously complex character, but he had a real big soul, with a passion for the under-dog, and I never met a more perfect gentleman." When Mr. Halkett retired through ill health, and Morley became editor, he appointed me as his assistant, and under him I spent the five happiest years of my working life.

There were handicaps, of course. A monthly magazine ought not to be prepared in weekly sections, or go to press three weeks in advance, and especially is this true of a periodical that aspires to be in touch with the moment. So well did Morley shape his course and his ideas that I doubt if he ever allowed the outside public to perceive such obstacles existed. As for the reduction in price from a shilling to sixpence, this suited his democratic humour and sharpened his competitive instincts. He saw no reason to cater for the clubman who never paid for his copy of the paper, and was always growling, anyhow. He hated everything that was supercilious, artificial, or obscure; he was all for approaching the universe and its contents in the language of the people and almost in an attitude of wonder. Though we might spend inconceivable trouble on a Wells serial or the reproduction of a Dulac cover, Morley's zeal at its best was reserved for humbler things. When, as too often happens, some glowing scheme or commission faded away into

perfunctory task-work, he was not the man to bring back the glow and the quality by scolding or scorn, and any course that rescued a worthy idea from the scrap-heap restored his good spirits. Once I remember, the endowment of a chair of criminology on the Continent led him to cable for an account from the new professor, and when it arrived on the eve of our going to press, he groaned aloud, for the manuscript was in tough French and vilely written. With the help of a typewriter in the hands of his faithful secretary, Mr. Bounds, the thing was translated at sight and caught the last packet to the printer, greatly to Morley's relief. Once when the Press was fiercely debating the fitness of women for the struggle of life, we sent a lady for a week into the heart of the East End without any means whatever, to see if she could make a living out of hand,—an experiment which justified itself in her fidelity to the scheme, the straightforwardness of her story, and its quite unliterary character. At another time a chance occurred just as we had

practically seen a number to bed, and he had gone for his summer holiday. London woke next morning to the news that the Government had adopted the Dreadnought design of Captain Cuniberti. A call at the Embassy, a cable to Genoa, and we soon had a photograph and an article from the inventor, so the situation was saved. These little things were what Morley delighted to honour, much more than the discovery of men of promise, possibly because he had done so much in this way himself that the quest had lost its novelty. A well-known etcher was an office-boy or little more, when Morley caught him sketching, and instead of rating him, sent him to an art school, and set him well on the way to a congenial career. And this was not the only case, by any means.

I never heard Morley complain, as editors will, that artists are difficult, and when he met a man after his own heart,—Mr. Hugh Thomson is the best instance I can call to mind,—there was not a thought they did not share to the full. In a long and characteristic

letter, Mr. C. M. Sheldon recalls many claims that Morley laid upon his gratitude. "I imagine now," he writes, "looking back a quarter of a century, that my western American point of view must have amused him. He sent me to all sorts of interesting places and always made me talk about them afterwards. He would just sit there smiling and ask me questions, and wrinkle up his face till I had emptied myself of my impressions. Once or twice I suspect he sent me very unlikely missions on purpose. Once, for instance, he told me to go and get a sketch of the Royal vault under St. George's Chapel, and at Windsor they laughed at me; I might as well have been sent to steal the Crown Jewels. It only occurs to me now that he meant to give me a pleasant day off. Those were the good old times when the world rolled slowly, without much in the way of jars, and it took some ingenuity to fill a *Budget* on occasion. He hit on the oddest subjects sometimes. I remember that on the front page once he used

a drawing I made of a rat-hunt in the press-room. He wrote an interview with the rat-catcher, very much in the vernacular, which made it go. . . . Those were halcyon days. When the papers were sold I was taken over with the other furniture, and after that I only saw him occasionally, to my profound regret. When I read that he was dead, I felt that I had lost the best friend I ever had. It was he who gave me my chance in life when I most needed it. Never was a kinder man or a cleaner-minded English gentleman."

But art with Morley, as sufficiently appears, was only a means to an end, and here he allowed no illusions. When Mr. Higginbottom, on his appointment as managing editor, decided to revive the old *Pall Mall* Academy extra, he put it back in Morley's hands, and for twelve consecutive years *Pictures of the Year* towered above all competition. The task was to determine beforehand from an avalanche of photographs what pictures would find favour at Burlington House, and here

Morley's intuition was all but infallible. To the claims of dawning genius and the pushfulness of studio touts, he remained adamant; his province was not to adjudicate according to merit, but to guess the voting of a body of unapproachable gentlemen behind closed doors; and with a total of several thousand pictures in front of him, he had rarely to throw any illustrations away. An hour before the Academy opened the familiar yellow extra was on sale, and its record of accepted works was so faithful that it looked as if the Hanging Committee had obtained a proof of the publication in advance and followed its decisions. Then and not till then Morley would pause and laugh at the adventures of his assistants who had gone with his indecipherable letters of introduction to notable painters and sculptors for permission to reproduce their works, and put these worthies in a state of frenzy. He was warmly attached to his regular art adviser, Mr. Edgar Wilson, the etcher and Japanese expert, not merely for his ability and experience,

but because he had something of Morley's own turn for observation, lively powers of description and mimicry, and a readiness to be catechised according to Morley's process of painless extraction. In this way many a race or fight would be reconstructed, and Morley, who dearly loved a scene of any sort where there was frolic or excitement going, surprised us by the way in which he could see everything through our eyes. He carried the same acuteness into the forecast of events. When professed politicians and leader-writers went astray in foretelling the results of a general election, I have known Morley hit the mark more than once by less than a dozen votes from the actual total; and we enjoyed this the more, perhaps, that we were aliens in a Tory camp. He was a past master in the fine art of rejection. When he had worked through a week's heap of manuscripts in half an hour or less, it looked like guesswork and a waste of stamps; but he only laughed and dared me to find anything good amongst the "goats," and though I

spent many an hour in his wake, by way of taking up the challenge, it was never with success. Part of the secret lay in the fact that no glamour of style or wriggle of argument ever affected his judgment, and it might have lessened the composure of our colleagues on the *Gazette* if they had known what a shrewd critic they had in a quiet corner. He had learned from Stead how to analyse a paper at sight, and to hit off new and fertile subjects for inquiry,—a faculty in which after thirty years of Press experience I have known only one man to equal him. But this brings us to the fifth act in the fateful story of the *P.M.G.*—days of brilliance and tragedy, and these are better left alone. Morley was so quick and sure in identifying the work of others that he rarely had reason to ask who was the author, and when he did it was a compliment worth having. His own editorial methods had much in common with his style of writing,—plainness born of unmeasured trouble, and directness with a message behind it. He showed the same

"incorrigible and losing honesty," as Elia put it, in the matter of his own advancement. More than once he refused a great "plum" in his profession, like the editorship of the *Illustrated London News* and a highly lucrative post on the *Daily Telegraph.* The cause he assigned was a dread of responsibilities, but it was much more probably a fear of new environments or a desire for unrestricted freedom of action and opinion. Contention utterly wore him out, and he shrank from any display of emotion, because this opened the floodgates of his own feelings, and here he gladly fell back on a cynicism to keep them fast. His other weapon in business intercourse was a shrewd mother-wit, touched off in good folk-speech, and enlivened with a gem of dialect or a flash of humour that was irresistible.

No man was simpler in his recreations. He was an accomplished swimmer, and in his younger days he made a canoeing trip down the Rhine from Cologne to the sea, but these fearful joys were renounced as he grew older. A country ramble would fill him with blithe

reflections for a week, and though he found change in France and Switzerland and Italy,—America bewildered and disappointed him,—his favourite holiday ground was Steyning and the Sussex Downs. A happy marriage in 1890 had helped to develop in him a passion for collecting old curios and furniture, and his friends must all regret that his memoranda on these and similar subjects lack the unity needed for a book. But conversation was his main hobby, and there was nothing better than to hear him tell his recollections of Meredith and Whistler and Stevenson, all of whom he had known. When Whistler was married at St. Mary Abbots, Kensington, he limited the witnesses to the cleaner and pew-opener out of a desire for secrecy, and then marching down the nave in triumph with his bride, he saw Morley, shamefaced and amused, half-hiding behind a pillar. "Morley, you rascal," he shouted, "come out. Who on earth told you of this?" "Oh," was the cheerful reply, "we know a few things in the newspaper world, you see," but he spared

the painter's feelings, and their friendship, dating from old *Budget* days, remained unimpaired. Whistler gave him several originals, —including rare pen-and-ink notes of the Sarasate and Carlyle portraits, which were lent to the Memorial Exhibition of 1905,—and drew for him a brilliant sketch of that gay panache of his, the enigmatic butterfly. Stevenson sent Morley his story, "The Body-Snatcher," for Christmas publication, because "Markheim" fell below approval, and then when he was not allowed to return part of the forty-pound fee on a twinge of conscience, he told Mr. Gosse that Morley was "a most desperate fellow." As a matter of fact, the gruesome character of the tale which cheapened it in the author's eyes was turned to account at the *Pall Mall* office with startling effect. In a kind of whim, Morley suggested a procession of sandwichmen with shrouds and skulls and coffin-lids, and Stead, who was innocent of Morley's sense of humour, put the idea into force, with the result that the grisly innovation was quelled by the police, the

procession was marched up to Bow Street, and the desired advertisement secured after all. Of Meredith, Morley had flashing memories. One of them chiefly dwelt on a chance encounter in the Strand when the novelist apostrophised the sunset in flamboyant terms that would have made Turner envious. But Stead, the madcap visionary, was the greater hero in Morley's eyes, and he never failed, if he possibly could, to attend those yearly levees when his old chief used to entertain a bobbery pack of guests on the gaol anniversary of which he was so proud. Stead used then to don the convict garb he wore at Holloway, and would recall with glee the times when Morley took his turn to wait on him in the presence of a turnkey and take instructions for the paper of the day.

As you listened to things like these and many more, the wonder grew that a man like Morley who had kept such heartening company should be so forbearing with the chatterer and the bore. His remedy against the plague of callers was to ensconce himself in the smaller and second-best

room,—we used to liken it to Bob Cratchit's tank,—and set up various lines of defence. But he could rarely resist the plea of a struggling author, never of a woman, and at the end of a wasted hour, he would declaim against the folly of poets (and poetesses most of all) ever appearing in the flesh. When conversation failed, there was always Dickens, and the disappointment he often expressed at never having seen Boz or heard him read, was made up by his friendship with the novelist's daughter. I remember an occasion where, in spite of his horror of meeting strangers, he made sixty friends for life,—it was my wedding day,—and he used to say it was its Dickens character that drew him out of himself. I prefer to think it was sincere rejoicing at seeing happiness secured to one whom he treated from the first with an affection that now can never be repaid. Childless himself, he showed a warmth of heart towards young people in many ways, and there is no better tribute to his memory than a letter from his nephew at the front, saying in

many pages: "He was more than a father to me. He was an example of everything that I should like to be." Charles Morley's soul was wrung with the thought of all this present waste and misery and torment to mankind. But from the first moment he was sound on the war. He had always distrusted Germany, and where his politics might have wavered, his humanity was his guide. A few months before his death he wrote to an old friend with whom he had had many a breezy wrangle in the past, saying, "I am a greater Tory now than you ever were." He died on Good Friday of the present year, and the approach of the end was mercifully short.

The present book, his fifth, is no mere reprint of articles but fresh material, and a better expression of Morley's mind than any of the others. "Studies in Board Schools" was an attempt to rescue the child's point of view from a vortex of controversy, but the book suffered from its dry and misleading title. "Teufel the Terrier," like his popular "Guide to the *Zoo*,"

revealed his interest in animals, and will always be endeared to the oldest order in the great army of humanism, the lovers of the dog. But though Morley gave the book its shape, the substance was supplied to him, and being largely anecdotal, is hardly worth reviving in an age when Mr. Galsworthy has endowed dumb creatures with a new eloquence. "London at Prayer," a series of brilliant magazine papers, and a task taken up at call after it had failed in other hands, is a wonderful example of his detachment from doctrine combined with unfailing sympathy, and all expressed from his favourite attitude of a benevolent citizen of the world. The *Westminster* extra, "Archie," which Mr. Spender has so well praised for its insight into the workings of a criminal mind disillusioned, has been hailed as a masterpiece by other good judges. Mr. Thomas Hardy told Morley that he had been more interested and touched by this true story of the life and conversion of "Dad Sloss" than by anything else of the kind he remembered. Its talk is largely

a mixture of Cockney and northern speech, but it has chapters of unexampled force and vividness, and one of them, "The Moper's Funeral," might have been written by the author of "Colonel Jack" or "Jonathan Wild." At the risk of blame for too many quotations, I cannot help giving the end of this story of a convict ship's conspiracy :—

> "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of His great mercy to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the deep——"
>
> The rest of the holy words were lost in the contending winds, the roar of the surging seas.
>
> "Heave," bellowed the skipper.
>
> "Heave it is, sir," cried Jerry and Archie.
>
> Away into the deep flew the Moper's body.
>
> "By God, he's afloat!" shouted the mate.
>
> "He's a live man," bellowed the skipper.
>
> Every glass was on the corpse, now far

behind. But it was no corpse,—the Moper was swimming.

"Fire!" roared the skipper.

Then they were half-drowned by a great wave, which same seemed to swallow up the Moper, and naught more was seen of him by the men of the Neptune. . . .

That night they dropped anchor in the Bay.

"Are you for a game?" said Jerry.

"Aye," said Archie. "What shall the stakes be? Rum, baccy, or limejuice?"

"Gold," said Jerry, still excited over the Moper's funeral.

"Hallo," cried Archie.

"Hush," said Jerry. Then he blabbered out the story. "Here's a piece to play with," said he.

"Ye knew he were alive, then?" said Archie.

"The sharks has ate him by now," said Jerry.

"Two for his nob."

"One for his heels."

Defoe, the first great English journalist, has been praised for his "minute and skilful

honesty," and the phrase exactly describes this book of "Travels." It was written in leisure moments, and as the old saying goes, for love. Morley would have added to it had he lived, but it is long and inclusive enough to stand as the appropriate bequest of a man with whom the study of London past and present amounted to a passion. That is why I have not lengthened it by adding any minor pieces from the great mass of manuscript I have explored, and indeed the labour of transcribing these chapters from draughts that were much disfigured by revision has not been a light one, written as they were in a hand that was hard to decipher at the best. I have struck out any real parallels with his previous books, and can only find one short passage that is indebted to any of his newspaper work. The book should appeal to all who care for close observation, well considered, and set forth in orderly and careful form. It needs no illustrations. The author obtains his effects by an accumulation of small touches, but none of

that elaborate polishing which spoils so much descriptive mosaic in print. The result is a faithful picture of certain unfrequented byways and survivals in London, and many will wish, as I have often done, that Morley could have been released from the routine of journalism and commissioned to travel without misgiving or hindrance so as to describe present-day England somewhat in the manner of Fynes Morison, and reveal us to posterity in our form and habit as we live.

Even with the generous and ready help of Sir Edward Cook and Mr. Spender, it has not been easy to make a connected account of a life spent in the shade like Morley's, but for my inadequacies others must not be held at fault. Besides friends already named, special acknowledgment for help is due to Mr. Leslie, Mr. and Mrs. Yates Thompson, Mr. Halkett, Mr. and Mrs. Pennell, Mr. Spielmann, Mr. Shorter, and others, some of whom have been prevented by illness and various causes from giving their contributions in their own words.

To Mrs. Morley I offer thanks for allowing me to pay this tribute to my old and honoured chief, and to her I dedicate my share in the preparation of this book.

J. P. Collins.

TRAVELS IN LONDON

WESTMINSTER ABBEY PRECINCTS

THE JERUSALEM CHAMBER

There is something more or less of the heroic in a study of the past, and especially in a passion for historic monuments like the Abbey. The nearer you approach it, the more exalted is your state of feeling, and the less disposed you are in consequence to make allowances. You come to it, even as an ordinary sightseer, with an almost personal sense of pride and possession, and are apt to forget the practical force of regulations which are a compromise between the public demands and the convenience of responsible people in charge. There are other limitations to be considered,—if you give the matter a moment's thought,—dictated by care for the safety and maintenance of the building, but above all, by the requirements of

daily worship. To ignore these restrictions is to lay yourself open to a possible rebuff, and the interruption to your moralisings is a test of your everyday philosophy.

It took more than one attempt to gain entrance to the Jerusalem Chamber, and I remember a fellow-applicant whose patience was not proof against the air of authority which accompanied the refusal, or rather, the advice to come on Saturday morning at eleven. He expressed indignation that a room so famous in the annals of Westminster should be in charge of so unsympathetic a person. I said I thought it natural that door-keepers should be an impatient race, being always at the beck of knock and ring, and we parted at that. Alas, the first available Saturday brought another trial in its way, for it was a brilliant summer's day, though we were in full autumn, and it seemed a pity to devote the best part of it to a pilgrimage under cover. The hot sun and the blue sky turned one's thoughts to country lanes ; all that savoured of decay and

the swift passage of time or steeped the soul in the vapours of melancholy, seemed altogether at variance with the spirit of the day. However, these contrasts and distractions have to be put aside if you are bent on inspecting the Abbey and its haunts, and enjoying the privilege afforded you in this, the most fitting place to study English history. Its aisles, its gloomy tombs, its time-worn cloisters are more eloquent than the printed pages of the chroniclers, and breathe life into the dullest records. We were reluctant to leave the bustling activity of the streets, humming with cheerful life and the prepossessions of to-day, and exchange the glorious sunshine for the sermons preached by the stones of the Abbey. But we had forgotten the outside world by the time we had entered at Solomon's Porch, and passed from the nave into the cloisters.

We lingered a few minutes to examine the tracery and to conjure up to our minds those pre-Reformation days when these gloomy walks were the very centre of the Abbey's life. Here

the monks worked and took their simple recreation; here they taught their novices, and told their beads, or conjured up fresh conceptions and designs for the illumination of their manuscripts. The floor was strewn with rushes or hay, a prey to the winds, the sun, and the rain, but the arrangement conduced to silence, and it must have been in silence that the old masters of the choir developed their wonderful and solemn chants. The stone benches on which they rested still remain, and fragments of masonry in the grim and blackened walls show where Abbot and Prior had their places. When they died, they were buried under these cold stone flags which wake the quiet echoes under our tread, or else in the green square of grass out there under the sky, every blade of which shines so brilliantly on this fair morning. All are gone, prior and sub-prior, sacrist and cellarer, whole generations of Benedictines, and these few tombs embedded in the masonry are all that tell us that they once enjoyed, as we do to-day, sun

and breeze and the vivid hues of the grass. So the liveliest fancy would find it hard to picture those far-off days when the Cross hung on these many-memoried walls, when they resounded to the strain of prayers and music, with the hum of talk, and the clang of long-perished bells, and looked down upon the processions of black-gowned figures filing into the Abbey for matins or vespers. I should like to pace these cloisters by night, and with a glimmering lamp or taper to grope my ghostly way around these walls, peering into fearsome doorways, watching the brooding shadows of vaulted arches, and starting at every breath of wind. Then, perhaps, would phantom monks come back and tell their secrets; but this garish sunlight dispels illusion, and the imagination is but a white sheet upon which no picture of the past appears.

An arch and gateway at the end of the South Walk lead into the Dean's Yard, and a knock at the Porter's Lodge there is sufficient to gain you admission to the Jerusalem Chamber.

You pass through a small square courtyard formed by a number of grey buildings of great age, all bearing marks of the ravages of time, and reach a door at the top of a short flight of well-worn steps. Our guide opened this with her key, and entering a dark and dusty lobby, took us into a square room with panelled walls and low ceiling and a window overlooking the court we had just left. This is the Jericho Parlour, and here it is that Elizabeth Woodville, queen of Edward the Fourth, lived when she fled to Westminster for sanctuary, taking the little Duke of York after the death of the king. It is a tragic tale, and known to most of us, but few even of those familiar with it, can be aware that this vivid memorial of it is so well preserved and close at hand. A round table covered with an ink-stained cloth stood in the window, the day we were there, a few old chairs were placed round the walls, there was an open fireplace, and a few prints hung here and there; but these signs of occupation did not remove a sense of oppression. The stale

odours of age filled the nostrils; such light as stole through the windows was faded; one looked out upon walls and pavement blackened with the London smoke, and even the sun seemed to be in eclipse. It was indeed a melancholy scene.

When Edward the Fourth died, his little son, a boy of thirteen, was proclaimed king, and his mother at once determined to bring him up to London, to be more completely out of the power of her many enemies. One of these was Lord Hastings, who insisted that to send a strong military force to guard him on his journey would be an insult to the ministers. She yielded, and Richard, Duke of Gloucester, seized him and had him carried to the Tower. When the ominous news reached Elizabeth she fled from Westminster Palace with her second son, and took refuge with the Abbot, whose Palace, like all the precincts of the Abbey, was sacred ground where none could touch a fugitive. Gloucester demanded the young Prince, making various pretexts, until the casuists came

to his assistance by deciding that, not having committed any crime, the child could not claim the protection of sanctuary. Richard, now in possession of the prince, sent him to join his brother in the Tower, where both of them were murdered. The story is whispered in every nursery, but though I have seen the turret steps in the Tower covering the place where their bones were found, and the small sarcophagus in the Abbey in which they now lie, I confess I found it hard to realise it all until the morning when I stood in the Abbot's ancient parlour whose walls once heard the piercing cries of the unhappy mother.

Doubtless in those times, as the guide will possibly remind you if you encourage discussion, the parlour was furnished with hangings and seats ; and there is a tradition that all Elizabeth's possessions were carried over from the Palace, for in those days only a wall divided it from the Abbey gardens. Here is another room taking us into a narrow slip of a chamber adjoining, and they say this was the poor

Queen's oratory. Then to my astonishment a small door opened and we saw before us a great dining-hall where the Abbots of Westminster entertained their guests. The great chamber looks to-day very much as it did then. At the far end is a minstrels' gallery, dark with shadows and bent with age, and below it run two gloomy passages leading to the kitchens. Here by the door is the high table, and there are seats for Abbot and Prior, whilst along either wall stand long tables ; spread, as they are, with white cloths and laid for dinner, it is almost possible to imagine oneself back in the era of poor Elizabeth Woodville, and see her sinking to her knees in the rushes upon the floor, as she besought his reverend lordship to help her in her fear and misery. After this, I can well believe that scene in English history, and am glad to think so venerable a building has escaped the onslaughts of time and man. The dinner whose appetising scent invades the nostrils is not for the guests of any Abbot, but for the King's Scholars of Westminster, and

they care less for ancient history, I fear, than the chronicles of the football and cricket fields, though here I may be doing them an injustice.

Going back through the parlours, our guide led us to another side door in a dark little passage, and we entered the Jerusalem Chamber, the real object of our little pilgrimage. Indeed it was with the humble and reverent feelings of the pilgrim that I gazed on an apartment so famous, for it has housed many scenes and many men conspicuous in our annals. It is hall-like in dimensions, lofty, spacious, dim and dun with time, and almost as sombre as the Jericho Parlour, though the sun invades it so brilliantly. The great apartment is clothed with an austere dignity that would impress the most audacious sightseer, however heedless he might be of his debt to the past, and however stubborn in the delusion that history really begins with his own time. The floor is carpeted, and a long table fills the middle of it; pieces of old tapestry hang on part of the panelled walls. There is a high carved mantel

of cedar wood reaching up to the ceiling, whilst a number of chairs and one or two tables complete the furniture. Our guide told us that the mantelpiece and tapestry were placed there by Henry the Eighth, but this was the only detail of interest among many, and the visitor must people the place with his own fancies, or be in danger of carrying away the impression that it is but a dusty, dusky old room like many another in historic places.

I leant awhile against the recess of one of the high windows which look out upon the hurrying crowd below, and summoned up the phantoms one by one. All this modern furniture faded away; the Chamber was lit by a few glimmering candles; the floor was strewn with rushes; the walls were hung with woven scenes of piety and fancy; logs were burning on the hearth. It was a bitter winter's afternoon, darkness reigned without, and the wind was moaning in the chimney. Hurried footsteps invaded the passage, excited voices were heard, and the groans of a dying man being

carried in and laid in a deep chair pillowed about with cushions. It was Henry the Fourth, who had been praying in the Abbey ere he set out to Jerusalem, whither he was going on pilgrimage in the hope of finding a cure for his leprosy. The soothsayers had told him he would die in Jerusalem, and in a way sufficient for the credulous in these things the prophecy was fulfilled, for here in this chamber he drew his last breath, his filmy eyes resting on the tapestry which depicted scenes in the Holy City that gave the room its name. We remember him rather as the father of Henry of Agincourt, that great and popular hero, who on this very spot craved his father's pardon and last blessing, for he had been a wild and rebellious youth.

So the two Henrys pass away, and Jerusalem Chamber looks down upon many another famous scene. Hither they led Sir Thomas More on that momentous day when he had refused to acknowledge Henry the Eighth as head of the Church, and he paced its floor with

what fortitude he could command until he was carried off to the Tower. Here also was a great banquet given by James the First in celebration of the betrothal of his son Charles to Henrietta Maria. The scene passes once more. Charles has lost his head and Cromwell's divines meet here for five long years to draw up a universal creed. Here in this old Chamber have been enacted pageants out of number by kings and abbots, and deans and ministers of state. Here lay Addison in the dim candle-light on the night they laid him in his grave in the Abbey ; and so the visions come and go with swift-moving time. Jerusalem Chamber has, indeed, been a stage across which many a great actor has fretted his little hour, and then vanished for ever. In our days the Deans of Westminster sometimes receive their guests in it, yet I confess it can offer but a forbidding welcome, and the sound of laughter in it would seem a sacrilege. So I fancy its chief use is for the discussion of Abbey business, since jubilees and pageants

and the burial of illustrious men come but seldom.

Does it add any charm to the past to find its relics and its buildings serving, with careful and reverent handling, the people of to-day? In the course of a long conversation I learned many things about the Abbey, its present as well as its past,—of the cares and duties of the Dean, and the frequent calls upon his time and patience. A great cathedral may put one in the mood for contemplation, but the care and control of it is no vocation for a contemplative mind, unless it has deep reserves of its own. It had been my privilege to know one or two of the Deans aforetime, as well as their assistants, and I remembered with some amusement that this contrast between the inside and the outside world was capable of taking strange links and forms. One delightful day I remember spending years ago with an Abbey verger long since gone to rest, a day illuminated by a touch that would have fascinated Dickens. This particular verger took me for lunch to an old-fashioned

resort near at hand where I met other vergers, and listened to a brisk exchange of their views and interests in life. My cicerone stood in high repute, I gathered, but chiefly, as I afterwards learned, from causes quite remote from the life and atmosphere of the Abbey. He was the father, it seemed, of a troupe of acrobats renowned in the variety world, and I can recall the relish of amusement it gave me to compare the glitter and risk and excitement of their life with the gravity of their venerable, white-haired sire in his black gown, who found his living amongst the dust of royal tombs, and discoursed concerning them with great unction and wide knowledge.

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL AND ASHBURNHAM HOUSE.

Possibly it was this bit of curious lore that ingratiated me with our conductress, but in any case it gained us an extra privilege. She was soon showing me and my friends through

the porter's lodge, in which the living rooms had clearly formed part of some vaulted chamber, but were now partitioned off into a suite of comfortable apartments. Some folk might have regarded them as dark and chill, for the windows were high up in the thick walls, and the ribbed stonework of the roof looked grim and stern. In the dark winters, at the shadowy eventide, when the gates are shut and the cloisters no longer echo with the footsteps of the stranger, then I think this mediæval chamber must be a somewhat formidable abode; yet the portress laughed when I asked her if she ever saw any ghosts. The building forms part of the grey row of ancient stone houses which you see on entering Dean's Yard; in these lived the Prior in older days, and other dignitaries and officials of the monastery. The canons and other reverend members of the Abbey's Chapter have taken their place, as you see from the small brass plates on the doors; and I suppose even in the old time these ancient rooms were the

porter's lodge, with perhaps waiting-rooms for the many callers, apart from the guest-room arrangements which were the appurtenance of every abbey according to its observance of the sacred laws of hospitality. But I am never likely to see a more curious domicile than this, and though some might deem it a trifle funereal, being victims of the modern spirit and hankering after ventilation and washable tiles and electricity and machine-made fittings, I confess I envied our hostess her conventual seclusion, so fitting for the nourishment of the historic spirit and the contemplation of the past.

Saunter, as we did, down the South Walk to the Chapter House, and you may examine many relics of interest displayed,—the stone seats of the monks, the central pillar at which they received their "discipline" or punishment, a fragment of painting behind one of the benches, and the long roll of a copy of the Bayeux Tapestry,—much clearer than one expects to find it. I tried to summon up pictures

of the ministerial conclaves and the parliaments that once gathered here. After looking at the uninviting door of the Pyx Chapel, we passed down the gloomiest haunt in all the Abbey, that dim and narrow passage which leads into Little Dean's Yard, as it is called, though it is really an approach to the buildings of Westminster School. A patch of bright sunlight beyond the arched doorway at the end of the passage intensified the shadows which filled it, though they were broken by crooked patches of light falling through one or two windows that pierced the thick walls of all that remains of the Confessor's buildings. We passed certain doors in the walls which gave access to a dwelling-house or two on one side, but ere we passed out into the School Yard, we penetrated another cavern-like passage which terminated in the four walls of a small cloistered and railed enclosure, filled with turf and centring in a fountain. Poor relic of imprisoned nature, it seemed sadly forlorn in this fortress of austerity. Here were more houses of clergy,

and one could not help seeing through an open door that the hall within had once been part of a chapel, opening on to a spacious garden. I was now able to form some idea of the plan of the old Monastery, and its Infirmary Garden, whose outer walls one sees in College Street. The houses themselves are built on the site of the Monks' Infirmary, and the vaulted portion still visible had been part of their chapel, called St. Catherine's. Retracing our steps we happened to find one of the sunken doorways in the main passage open, and asked the man who was standing there if we might see it. He bade us enter, and we found ourselves in the oldest part of the Abbey, as was evident by the character of the Norman pillar, with its heavy capital slightly carved with a Norman design. This, we learned, had been used for a stable by Cromwell's men when they held the Abbey; but the building was the Confessor's work, and was the crypt of the Monks' Dormitory. He showed us a small window high up in the wall, barred with rusty

iron, spun over by spiders, which lighted the Pyx Chapel. It was now fitted up as a gymnasium for the Westminster boys, and a high pole reached up to its roof, which the ambitious among them strive to climb.

We emerged into Little Dean's Yard, and walked up the steps which lead to the Big School Hall, where we gained permission to join a visiting party already formed. We found ourselves in a vast panelled hall with a timbered roof and a high clerestory. It was filled with seats, and a few boys were at work, with Gradus and dictionary, at small tables. This, then, was Westminster, the Big School, and served as chapel and assembly-room, as well as for scholastic purposes. On the tops of the chairs I noticed slips on which were prayers printed in Latin. The walls were hung with great black boards, on which were scored the names of generations of boys; and at the end, in a sort of apsidal or crescent, were seats for the sixth form, divided by the archaic chair of the Head Master, an old oak table much

worn and hacked, and in front of that again, a coffer from which projected ends of two birch-rods. This then was the throne and court of the famous Busby, though the birches were of modern manufacture. Things had changed with the passing of time, but here once slept the monks, for this was their dormitory. The friend who was with us paused and asked the School Serjeant who was showing us round,—he has charge over the school buildings and the gates,—whether he remembered her brother. "Yes, well," he said; it seemed young —— was the school's best slow bowler for his day, and helped the Westminsters to beat Winchester for the only time on record. What was more, he had won a scholarship and an eminent place in the school, and was now a well-known civil servant in India. The cricket was remembered; the rest was forgotten. And I thought that if the old abbots and monks had shone at some ancient sport, they might have been kept and valued in remembrance even now.

We asked if we might see Ashburnham House, the old seventeenth-century mansion enclosed by railings and covered with creepers, which occupies one side of the yard. Used as a library, it stands on the site of the Misericordia, or smaller refectory devoted to the lay brothers of the Abbey. The Serjeant said that if we came about three o'clock, he would show it to us, and so we returned to the Cloisters, and entering the Abbey, paid our sixpences and spent one of the intervening hours among the Royal Tombs, being allowed to roam about alone without the guidance of the verger. I can recommend no better cure for vaulting ambition than such a tour, for our kings and queens lie in the gloomiest part of the Abbey where the deepest shadows gather. Pale and feeble is the light that filters reluctantly through the soot-encumbered windows; faint are the sun's rays that glance upon the chill and crumbling stones enclosing these illustrious remains. Better far the simple mound of upturned turf in some country churchyard,

where the wind chants its dirges for charity, where birds sing and leaves rustle, and the air is fragrant with the incense of flowers.

When we had made our round, we went into the open for a meal, and found it pleasant enough to be back again in the throng and the sunlit streets filled with a Saturday crowd going homeward with their wages. We stopped on Westminster Bridge to see the Naval Brigade march by to the Park for an afternoon of warlike exercises, and for this part of their march at least, they were followed and preceded by troops of ragged boys from the slums of Lambeth, who seemed inspired by the sight of arms, the rhythm of tramping feet, and the sound of stirring music. Then we returned under the arches to the School Yard, where the Serjeant was awaiting us. He took us into the Big School again, and unlocked a door which connected it with Ashburnham House. It contains many fine and spacious rooms we now inspected with much interest. They were furnished with many chairs and

tables for the performance of school tasks, and many of the walls were hidden by books, for it served also as the School Library. As an example of a nobleman's residence of two hundred years ago it was notable enough, showing what regard was then paid to simplicity and elegance of design, and how indifferent our sires were then to considerations of light. Perhaps it was that hideous infliction, the window-tax, at work. But what interested me most was the view commanded by the back rooms on the higher floors. Through these windows we saw the bare walls of what was once the Monks' Refectory,—no mere fragment, but a piece that was long and high, bleached and weatherbeaten, and the window recesses could be easily discerned. Now it stands alone, overlooking the narrow patch of green that was once the garden of Ashburnham House, and before that the floor of the monastic dining-room. I could not help loitering to look upon the worn old stones that form, I suppose, the wall of the

South Walk of the Cloister, in which may still be seen the marks of the door that gave the monks admission. But the Serjeant had other things to show us. By some back staircase he took us into the famous dormitory of the Westminster boys, a long narrow chamber, gloomy enough, with windows high up in the walls, and rows of cubicles called "houses" on each side of it, each shut off by a curtain. Pulling one of these aside, we saw the simple cell in which the King's Scholars sleep, for the dormitory is sacred to the elect forty who have so many privileges in the Abbey, going where none other may, by long established prerogative. A bed, a chest of drawers, and a washstand, composed the chief furniture of each division, though every scholar had pictures hanging on the walls, ornaments about him, and other mementos of home and his short career. In this room is given the annual Latin play with its time-honoured ceremonies, and its witty carnival of comment on the men and things of the day.

We descended into the lower regions, and found ourselves in a dark chamber, one side of which was divided into a number of box-like partitions where the boys study. The Serjeant repeated the familiar tale how once in the year the boys enter one by one, holding lighted candles, with which each climbs a rickety ladder of chairs as high as the ceiling, generally toppling down with a crash and a pile of ruins from which he emerges as best he can. What a symbol of the greater part of human endeavour!

THE CEREMONY OF THE DOLE.

On another morning when I visited the Abbey, white autumn mists hanging over the great clusters of buildings surrounding Palace Yard, softened the outlines of tower and pinnacle and blent them into immense and threatening masses. I had come,—it was early forenoon,—to see the ceremony of the weekly

dole. I entered the Abbey by the West door and found the transept already crowded with tourists who by the mixture of awe and curiosity in their faces were evidently inspecting the Abbey for the first time. My intention had been to reach the Cloisters by the small door in the nave, but the iron gates leading to that portion of the Abbey were closed, so I turned back and went round by Dean's Yard. A number of old women, perhaps a dozen, were waiting at the door of the porter's lodge for ten o'clock to strike; some sitting on the projecting masonry, others leaning against post and pillar, all gossiping quietly with one another. A stranger would have wondered what business had brought them to this sombre archway which wore so melancholy an aspect on this misty morning, and though perhaps the bags they carried in their hands might have betrayed their motive, no one, I am sure, would suspect that an ancient custom of benevolence could have survived so long. I lingered about the doorway, pretending to be curious about the

roof and the solid masonry, but really the better to note the appearance of these poor people, who were glad to come here every Saturday morning for a loaf of bread, and a small packet or two of tea. Their baskets or bags were large enough to have carried much more,—poor home-made articles, cloth most of them, though others were of string or leather. I seemed to notice that those who had the soft cloth bags shrank into the darker shadows, and I judged that they chose this material as it would better assimilate with their gowns and cloaks, for even the humblest beneficiaries may still retain that honest pride which is ashamed to accept a dole. That is not a pleasant word, for a dole signifies a pittance, or minute allowance, given for charity's sake; but even a small loaf is better than no bread, especially when it costs only a visit and a few minutes' patience. I scanned them closely, and was touched to see how respectable they seemed, but dire poverty often hides itself beneath well-tended garments that have an air of outward comfort. Perhaps those

hats and bonnets, those dingy black mantles, those fur tippets were only brought out on Saturdays and Sundays; it may be that they rested on the shelves of the pawnbroker for the rest of the week; nay, they might be borrowed from poorer neighbours. But I felt their neat and decent aspect to be intended as a tribute to the Church and to the memory of the pious founder who hundreds of years ago bequeathed the funds that furnish the Abbey dole. As I had been pacing up and down the cloister, the crowd had grown, and there must now be at least forty applicants gathered together, amongst whom I noticed several young girls and one or two men, possibly plenipotentiaries come on behalf of bed-ridden mothers and wives. Suddenly the porter's door opened, and one by one the callers entered, each coming out with bag well filled, and hurried off home through Dean's Yard, some by the gate leading into College Street, others by the more public one which takes you into the roar of Victoria Street.

I now hurried away to pursue some investigations that I wished to make, for our previous visit had been a little hurried and I feared that some of the impressions I had carried away might be incorrect. I had just reached the Little Cloisters when there opened an arched and ancient door with its step sunk beneath the flagged pavement, and there emerged a file of choristers, clad in scarlet cassocks, white surplices, and college caps. They formed into regular lines, and followed by an elderly man in a black gown whom I took to be their master, filed into the gloomy passage by which I had come, and quickly disappeared in the longer corridor which leads to the East Cloister and the Abbey nave. The little group made a pretty picture, and their bright costumes filled the sombre shadows with cheerful colours, and helped me to a more vivid impression of monkish times when such processions were commoner and more impressive than they are now. I heard the sound of a bell ringing faintly, and the notes of sweet bird-like childish

voices in the rooms whence the choristers had come, all blending to beautiful chords struck lightly upon a piano. The grim walls, the thick door, could not immure the sounds, which swept through chinks and crannies and then died softly away. Then I heard the echo of a door opening, of sharp and firm footsteps, and one of the Abbey clergy appeared, in cap and gown and surplice, and he disappeared in his turn. A man with his shirt sleeves rolled up was sweeping the dead leaves that had been blown in from the garden square, where a large plane-tree grew, and he and I were now the only occupants of the Little Cloister.

There were many things of interest to take the eye, as one made the tour of the enclosure, stopping here and there to examine the weather-stained masonry, the doors of the Abbey clergy residences painted a rich brown and decorated with iron work, and inscribed on small brass plates with well-known names. The clergy live in a claustral gloom; the noise of the warring world without scarce penetrates to this

dim retreat; the Abbey bells, the rumble of the organ, the voices of the choristers must be ever in their ears. When their eyes fall they are reminded of the brief span of mortal life, of ceaseless change; here the very earth is sacred, for the dust of the great mingles with every handful. The plashing water of the fountain rises for a moment and then sinks out of sight; nearly every breath of air brings down a shower of brown leaves from the plane tree, leaves which only a few weeks ago were drinking in the sunlight and slaking their thirst with the showers. As I paced to and fro, through window and open door I saw how the very houses rest upon the ruins of monastic buildings,—in this case the ancient chapel and infirmary. The garden court is guarded by time-worn rails, and resting against these I was able to obtain a view of the upper parts of three sides, whilst on the fourth, towards the south, loomed the Victoria Tower — great symbol of the modern spirit—which in this misty morning looked like some monster form

brooding vigilantly from the skies. I paused in one corner darker than the rest, and looking up, encountered the heavy eyes of a bat which hung from some projecting masonry. I suppose I had disturbed its slumbers, but it gave no sign, and might easily have been mistaken as part of the stonework. These cloisters must be realms of ghosts indeed by night; bats flit to and fro; and a few dead leaves racing over the sunken flags, the wind moaning down long passages, the creaking of the plane-tree, people them with unutterable and unearthly visions.

I now returned to the low sunk passage, so rude and massive, and on my left saw the front door of the Abbey organist, whose house overlooks the garden court. Sundry small windows of irregular shape were embedded in the walls on either side, some filled up with brick or stone, some glazed to give a few persevering rays to the rooms within, others guarded by rusty iron bars. The pavement I was walking on was composed of gravestones. I emerged

into the longer passage and, returning to the South Walk of the Great Cloisters, looked down towards the School. By this time the mist had lifted, and a few beams of sunlight played upon the dull stones, and even penetrated into this clammy tunnel, for it is thus best described. The invading light turns it to a pale dun colour. The right hand wall is pierced near the entrance at the door of the Pyx Chapel by some lozenge-shaped windows, and further down by openings oblong or square, admitting light, as I now understood, from the garden of Ashburnham House. On my left I saw the sunken door of the gymnasium, a vaulted chamber built in Norman mes running beneath the Monks' dormitory, now the school hall of the Westminster boys. Walking to the end once more I noticed two or three more of these low doors and also observed marks of others which had been filled up with stones and brickwork, to meet the needs of later generations. The rashest spirit cannot fail to be impressed by the changes that time brings in its train, and here

one may read the signs as easily as the letter-press of a printed book.

Back in the Cloisters a solitary policeman was passing the time by spelling out the inscriptions on the tombstones which composed the pavements, all of them thinned and worn by generations of footsteps. He yawned and then whistled, and talked to himself, and I am afraid he found the pervading gloom depressing. I tried to find some vestige of the Prior's throne in the North Walk which runs along the nave, for here he sat and ruled the monks, watching that they did their tasks. I looked across at the South Walk and for the first time noticed the bare grey wall of the Refectory and the stones of arches which had once crowned the windows. I noted the staircase up the great buttress that projected from the East Cloister. My eye fell on the green turf and I saw to my surprise an uplifted grid rising out of it, and going nearer, found that it was the entrance to a vault filled with machinery, devised, as I suppose, for filling the Abbey

organ. It gave one a strange sense of contrast to see this instrument of an instrument working there, down among the dead. From this East Cloister, again, I was better able to see how the Abbot's House and the less ancient buildings of the Deanery were related to the Abbey and the Refectory. Two gabled walls of heavy brick pierced by a number of small windows, lay upon the end of the West Cloister and covered the space that intervened between its back and the entrance to the Dean's Court. Thus it bridged over that dark arched passage that led to my porteress's lodge, and the other that took you into the Deanery. A tiny green-house jutted out upon the Cloister roof, and one or two bushes seemed to show that there was a garden.

Thus I lingered, trying to piece the scattered fragments together, with the chanting of the choir and the reverberation of the organ in my ear,—sweet, mellow sounds which penetrated all the place. They ceased, the service was over, the door at the end of the East Walk

opened, and the choristers marched past me in double line towards their chamber in the Little Cloisters. I heard footsteps across the garth, and saw the clergy pacing down the West Walk; one of them strode rapidly down the South Walk, and there met the boys, each of whom touched his cap. The procession was over; I was alone again. Presently I entered the sombre archway which led me into the Abbot's Court, noticing that the front door of the Deanery is on its right side, and that a rusty iron gate shuts the archway off from the Cloister, the porter's lodge, and the main gate. The Abbot and Dean are well guarded, indeed. Near the old wooden staircase which leads up to the Abbot's Dining Hall, I watched with a change of mood the tradesmen bringing their baskets of provender to the low door beside it, marked on a small brass plate, "College Butler." The door was open and within I saw a dim little passage lit with a jet of gas, where the servants were busy. This was the entrance to the school kitchens, which lay

behind that oaken screen we had seen the other day from the high table. Another door by the flight of steps leading to the Jerusalem Chamber was also open, and working towards it I saw another obscure passage serving a similar purpose. Thackeray would have made half a chapter of these college kitchens, but it is not so easy to bridge the centuries gracefully. These mediæval buildings are not easily adapted to modern notions, and I do not suppose that cooks any more than policemen have a great regard for these hoary relics of an age of builders that has vanished. It would be difficult to find a more crooked, uneven old place than the Abbot's Court; the windows are turned this way and that; the walls bulge; the stones are encrusted with soot; the mortar is eaten out of many a crevice; there are doors closed up,—some sunk deep under the grass-grown cobbles. The windows of Jericho Parlour are fast crumbling in decay; the older portions of the Dean's House seem to tremble in the balance.

Turning away, I passed out into Dean's Yard. On my right was the masonry that composed the end of the Abbot's Dining Hall and enclosed the kitchen and offices; on my left were the hoary walls of the Prior's House, a part of which is inhabited. Gone are the Priors, the Canons of the Abbey reign there now, and I dare say are often oppressed by the monastic gloom. Their windows command a view of the dank and dismal square of grass which to-day is strewn thick with autumn leaves. The buildings are like some fortress, so thick and stubborn are the walls. A few paces beyond the Canon's door is an ancient archway leading into a vaulted porch whose aspect chills the blood; centuries of rain and smoke and tempest have eaten deep into the stonework; beyond is a high and narrow court bounded by an old brick wall on two sides, whilst on the other is the back portion, as I suppose, of the Prior's House, distinguishable by the crookedness of its windows. A few more paces, past another archway leading to the

School buildings, brought me to the old stone portal leading into College Street. The two other sides of the Dean's Yard are filled with buildings of comparatively modern date, and serve as offices to various ecclesiastical authorities and societies, all sheltering under the shadow of the Abbey.

To walk slowly down College Street is to trace the old wall of the Abbey Garden in which the monks used to take the air. Tall houses overlook it, and trees whose leafy boughs give a touch of freshness to the narrow roadway in which old and new elements mingle in a friendly fashion. Old-world houses of the period of the Restoration or Queen Anne—quaint, low-ceilinged places which retain a strange attractiveness by their simplicity, gratify the sense of fitness, and in these days when the automobile is carrying the majority of the well-to-do to live further and further away from town, it is well that a few choice spirits are combining here and by keeping this region one of almost domestic seclusion, are saving a

beautiful section of old-world Westminster from the speculator and the jerry-builder. A mews seems to mar the general harmony, but even the purlieus of Westminster cannot dispense with necessities, I suppose. At the end of the long lane which harboured this stabling, a square stone tower seemed something of a discovery until I learned from a leaf-sweeper, leaning gravely upon his broom, that this was the Jewel Tower which one had often heard of but never seen. It was the stronghold where kings of old used to keep their crown and sceptre and the rest of their regalia ; but that was centuries ago, and it has long survived its original use. Tradition has it that the monks sold the tower to the third Edward, but it is certain that the building had long lost any connection with the Abbey and had become government property. In recent years, said my informant, the Premier had kept his motor car there, or rather in its surrounding yard. The man whom I questioned turned out to be the directing spirit of the mews, and showed

me his house above the stabling, as well as the little garden he had made against the old Monastery wall, chiefly by husbanding a little earth in fragments of old boxes. It had lost its summer glory now, for the season was advanced, but he assured me his geraniums and marguerites had done surprisingly well that year, and even now the creeper he had trained up the wall shone out in reddening splendour as if for corroboration of this natural pride in his handiwork. It hung like a rich carpet down the aged wall, and this touch of well-tended nature seemed a kind of compensation for the ruthlessness with which the march of "improvement" and utility had proceeded hereabouts, and had blocked up with stones and rubble, for instance, the gateway by which the monks used to enter and take their jaunts in the Prior's meadow. I listened with becoming awe to the story that a subterranean passage once led right along the lane and down to the river, for what purpose no man could say. There always is a subterranean misgiving

about these old religious houses, and I have heard of many of these tunnels, but never seen one. A few more turns brought me back by the great hall of Church House and then through a nest of slum houses in the last state of decay, and thronged with wretched children. They have had playgrounds given them since, these little waifs of Westminster, and the embankment has been opened up in a way we can all admire ; but our ancient city of the West cannot altogether air its pride so long as these hovels remain in all their squalor. Under the shadow of the Abbey they shelter like their finer neighbours, and from their garrets and cellars, I doubt not, come some of those needy old souls who came that Saturday morning to obtain the time-honoured dole from Porter's Lodge.

THE TOWER AND ITS TREASURES

It was a warm, still afternoon, such as hardly invited one to the fresh exploration of an old and favourite resort like the Tower, yet I was glad to find the old place thronged. People to whose judgment, as a rule, I gladly defer, prefer to go there when Tom, Dick, and Harry are at work, but I confess it is in the light of the people's appreciation that the Tower and so many other public monuments appeal to me, and the man who deliberately chooses a Saturday afternoon is not likely to be deterred by a crowd. There were many visitors invading and pervading the hoary old place, and more were still expected, for the pavement which runs round the top of the garden overlooking the moat was lined with hawkers of cheap toys and picture postcards at so many pence per dozen. We paused to inspect the gallery of

a pavement artist whose canvas was the hard flagstones and his colour bits of chalk which lay in a mound by his side. The artist himself was an old man of respectable appearance, though piteously shabby, with white hair and beard, who sat with his back against the railings as he watched the passers-by, and left his head bared and his cap upon the ground to make their own appeal. These told their story quite as vividly as did his pictures, for in point of fact the slab of gory salmon on a shapeless dish, and the luminous lifeboat swooping on a crouching and dismantled ship have been so often done that they require something more than lurid colours and violent shading to recommend them. But we must pay for these artless wiles which really show a sensibility that is uncommon in these days. I looked with admiration on the blue mountains and the red-roofed cottage, the storm-beaten lighthouse shedding its rays upon raging waters, the harvest field, the ripple-patterned lake, the homestead on fire, and the gallant fireman

coming out of a window with a babe in his arms, the soldier's return to the bosom of his family, and other subjects that never fail to stir the popular emotions. I felt sorry, indeed, that such gifts of fancy and such skill in composition should be doomed to perish in a day like a flashing dragon-fly. The later fashion of these painters is to carry their pictures with them, but these, as I have noticed, awaken no compassion, for they create suspicion that the pictures are mere hireling stuff, rented in some lodging-house, where the real artist manufactures wholesale such appeals to popular sentiment. But one must indeed be made of flint who does not feel a pang of regret that nearly a score of pictures must be left to the cruel mercy of the rain when night comes down, or earlier, alas! if a shower comes on. Even a high wind makes havoc with the soft chalk, and there are ruthless people ready to walk over landscape and seascape without a scruple.

I saw that the cunning artist had laid traps for the passer-by even in the sunlight. I

thought I trod upon a piece of newspaper, but found it was another picture, drawn where it was bound to arrest attention. I saw a penny lying on the pavement, and was about to pick it up when I heard a ragged urchin laughing. It was a painted coin, and the drawing had drawn others before I came upon the scene. As a rule, though, the Cockney hurries so fast on his way that he seldom notices the things about him. It is no fault of his, but rather of the great city he lives in, which is so full of wonders and of movement. I now discovered other devices equally as ingenious as the piece of paper and the penny. There were a wooden match-box, a postcard, an envelope, a basket of strawberries, a melon, and a fruit knife, a box of sardines with the lid open, and other pieces of still life,—all common objects, and all faithfully portrayed. "This is my own work" ran the legend which accosted the eye in a series of curly letters of red, yellow, blue and green, and the humble challenge beguiled me of a penny or two. The artist followed up

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the claim with a word or two of earnest assurance, saying he had painted the whole gallery in the early morning, except four pieces which were completed on the previous afternoon. He said he did not obliterate them on going away, as one supposed, for fear some rival inferior in talent and morality alike, might storm the position; he preferred to trust to luck and the weather, and work on yesterday's traces, and freshen them up, or rather restore them, next morning.

Most of us regard the Tower as one of those lions which only the visitor ever goes to. What a mistake! London is so vast, and offers such an immense variety of sights in its various quarters at all hours of the day and night, that one may be forgiven if he expresses surprise at the size of this particular crowd which is now under view, and at its composition. For it is largely composed of children, grown-up folk being decidedly in the minority. There are the children of the streets—wild-eyed Arabs, ragged rather, and not over clean; the little

mothers of the slums, with those big babies hanging about their bosoms; flocks of school children—prim, well-washed, clad in their Sunday best; work girls, more than ever emancipated. The grown-ups are workmen, tidied up; fathers and mothers; whole families; big brothers and sisters; a few country folk; just a sprinkling of foreigners; and one or two of the highly respectable. Strangely sound these childish voices, these Cockney calls and cries and whistles amongst these grim and frowning walls; how vulgar the common breeches of modern civilisation look as we glance at the picturesque old Beefeaters, thinking the long hours away in niche and corner; why, whole gangs of boys are playing even in the very moat itself, where once to bathe was death—that short, sharp shock for which the Tower doctors had such a reputation. The crowd, though so largely composed of children, is quite orderly and misses nothing, and the garrulous guide is now no longer permitted to browse upon the unfortunate visitor.

The arrangements are so good, and so self-regulating, that you have only to follow the painted signs to see all that the public is shown. We may ask for more—for Raleigh's dungeon, for Anne Boleyn's chamber, for admission to the little church of St. Peter ad Vincula—but there is really quite enough for a two hours' visit. And after that space of time the eye and the head and the legs have had quite enough of it. First on the list is the Traitors' Gate, just facing the Bloody Tower. Both of these terribly named objects are strangely peaceful this afternoon, and so are the sounds that fill the air. It may be that thrush there, at the window amongst the rich growth of crimsoning creeper, who is singing his heart out to the sable heavens; it may be the shrill, piercing notes of the steam siren which proclaims the presence of yonder bustling steamboats—through the fretted frame of the gate top you gaze out upon the teeming life of the river. It may be the childish trebles—at all events, it is difficult to associate such

sounds with crime and bloodshed. The bolts are shot through Traitors' Gate; it is hung with creaking locks; and the Cockney sparrows are hopping about on the stones at its base, over which have floated so many kings and queens and famous statesmen.

A crowd near the Wakefield Tower was gathered round another Beefeater. That day all fees were abolished, and fathers and mothers had brought their children to see the sights, and conjure up as best they could all sorts of pictures to illustrate the history they learned at school. The Beefeater, fierce as he looked, turned out to be very good-natured, and evidently enjoyed his power and position, for he never ceased shouting his directions to the people, accompanying them with gestures, and even putting his podgy hands on the children's shoulders, or patting some substantial matron on the back with a half-humorous protest against the wilful ways of women who would never do as they were told, but defied even the authorities of the Tower of London.

"Why won't you obey orders?" I heard him say, his hands uplifted, a querulous, plaintive smile playing about his lips and eyes, as if to indicate that nobody would have been more surprised than himself if they did. "Now, m'm, why won't you do as I keep telling you? My orders are that nobody must go back up the hill, but must leave by the archway here," pointing to the gloom of the "Bloody Tower." "Now, please, you boys and girls, keep to your left now." His eyes had to be everywhere, you see, and I do not wonder that they looked inflamed. No sooner had he put one group in the proper path than another demanded his attention, for the entrance to the Jewel Tower was by a narrow door, and the dark staircase was filled with two lines of people, one ascending, the other coming down. Only a sense of fair play divided them. We took our place at the foot of the steps and crept slowly up the uninviting staircase, oppressed by the darkness, the crushing thickness of the walls that enclosed us, and the

uneasy feeling that the ghosts of the murdered dead might be hovering around us. I seemed to feel a choking in my throat; my heart-beats quickened; my eyes craved for the air and the light, as I felt the touch of the greasy stone in my hand. The laughter and the voices of the crowd acted as a restorative, and we arrived at the top with the gleam of gold and the sparkle of diamonds greeting the eye, for there, enclosed under a great cupola of glass and iron, was the magnificent array of the Crown jewels.

A stout rope formed a gangway and prevented any confusion, as was necessary enough; whilst two burly Beefeaters, whose very bulk would have overwhelmed a possible robber, or even a band of conspirators, saw that the lines of entrance and exit were duly kept. The Wakefield Tower is a high, round, vaulted chamber, lighted by two or three small windows in walls of immense thickness. By these stood the Beefeaters, who never ceased shouts of "Keep moving, keep moving, keep moving."

By the noise they made they might have been hungry lions roaring for their meal, and the words echoed so between wall and ceiling that the din was deafening and even alarming. But I daresay the Beefeaters were really hungry and wanted to get away to their quarters.

Lingering here and there to see the King's house or Lieutenant's lodgings, the Traitors' Gate and St. Thomas's Tower, we reached the tail of the line slowly coiling into the White Tower of the Conqueror. The turret staircase was dark and hot and crowded, but we rose slowly and emerged in safety into the Banqueting Hall, where we duly took our fill of horrors with the rest of the crowd of men, women, and children. Like them we shuddered at the sight of the axe, the block, the rack, the thumbscrew, the bristling array of knives, swords, guns, pikes, and hundreds of other weapons which men have invented to destroy each other in the years since Christ was born. A member of the crowd remarked as much, and began to propagate his views

with true East-end fervour and an indomitably Radical point of view. He pointed to the stand of arms ahead, a great mill-wheel of radiating bayonets and cutlasses, with a decorative centre of something appropriate, and then to the glass cases containing mantles of velvet and ermine shining and glowing like his own hot rhetoric against the show of cold and taciturn steel around us. I studied the beautiful fur and reflected how fortunate man was to be born with a skin that no furrier can possibly use as an ornament. I only know of one example of its use as a decoration ; but perhaps you have seen it. It still covers the door of the Pyx in the Cloisters of Westminster Abbey, and once covered the flesh and bones of some monks who stole certain moneys from Edward the Third's treasury. We continued our inspection and found fascination everywhere. The King's coronation robe was much handsomer than the Queen's, of course, for it was covered with roses, shamrocks, and thistles,—the last so real that a donkey would have

kicked the side of the case in if he were here inspecting.

In spite of the noise and the crowd I was able to see the crowns of the King and Queen, those] richly jewelled caps of red velvet and ermine which are such potent symbols ; their sceptres and all the gold vessels used by the Archbishops and clergy at the coronations in Westminster Abbey. These are very curious ; one had read of them in the books dealing with such solemn rites, but in these days of ours when little heed is given to symbols, and mankind is intent on material facts, even the most pious can scarcely believe that the head of a State cannot be installed in his office without the use of all these spoons, salt cellars, ointment pots, and other really beautiful works of art, which make such a rare show for us, all gleaming and shining in the powerful flood of electric light. Electricity is, indeed, one of the new forces that have done much to kill respect for those great ceremonials of the Church and the State, which have come down

to us from those who inhabited the Tower in the old times. Yet the crowd has to see a Crown; there is magic in the word; fathers and mothers lift up their little ones to let them gaze upon the wonderful things they will never forget; and some day these will bring their own children to look upon its flashing glories. So I cannot help thinking there is no wonder, in view of these dazzling things and implements, and the beautiful legends woven round them, at the hush that falls every now and then even upon this Saturday afternoon crowd.

In the deep recesses by the windows are shown some of the Orders which kings hang on the bosoms of worthy subjects, and thus pay them in other coin than money. I looked carefully at the insignia of the famous Order of the Garter, and saw the Garter itself, a narrow band of blue silk on which were embroidered in gold lettering the famous words, "Honi soit qui mal y pense," the wide collar of gold and jewels, and various other rich

ornaments which completed the suite. Then we turned to the light of day once more.

The heat was tropical. I can understand the feelings of a poor captive in the hold of a slave ship. Those Normans were not fond of light, they never felt easy unless their walls were a dozen or fifteen feet thick so that no lance or arrow could penetrate. Better than any of their buildings the Tower proves that the Normans must have thickness; length and breadth with them were of less import. These castle staircases, too, seemed built for defence. We passed out of one gloomy chamber and took our turn in the line at the bottom of the steps that wound upwards in the gloom, relieved at intervals by a window or two which were just slits in the massive wall. A man of spirit could have held the passage against a mob. About half-way up I heard a child crying, though the windings of the steps hid it from view; the little thing had taken fright at the darkness, and we were brought to a halt. "Show him the sun," said some woman who

certainly had a lively fancy, and they evidently turned his face to the light and let him look out to see that the sky and the rain and houses were still there. The steps brought us to the famous Council Chamber, where the Duke of Gloucester bared his withered arm to his Cabinet, swearing that sorcerers had been at work, and ordered their associate, Lord Hastings, to instant execution. So we all associate this room with the leading villain in the great drama we call the History of England, and I am bound to say that it seems to have been constructed for tragedy, though it is the uppermost chamber in the White Tower that glimmers so pure and fair in the sun-steeped autumn mists, and makes so stately a landmark amongst the multitudinous roofs and chimneys of London. A passage composed of many arches, like a church aisle, and wide enough for a man to walk through, runs like a girdle between the chamber and the outer walls, and a flood of light pours through the windows and the open spaces between

the piers, though there is also a skylight in the roof.

It is well that there is enough light here, for we are now in the Tower Armoury, and the sheen of burnished steel flashes into your eyes as you come up out of the darkness. How it vivifies a myriad shadows and descriptions you have met with in the past. Many a knight in full panoply have I seen in holy places, drawn on brass and embedded in Purbeck blue stone, or sculptured with infinite art in marble. I have hung over them on many a holiday, and mused upon their fortunes, thinking how strange men must have looked who walked abroad in such forbidding guise. One finds in some quiet spot a splendid knight in full suit of armour, of which every detail has been chiselled by the artificers; his gauntleted hands clasped across his breast, his helm resting on a pillow, his feet on some strange beast of heraldic invention. He must have been a man of wealth to have ordered or have been given so rich a monument to cover his bones. His name I

can decipher, but it carries no meaning. Famous in his day, perhaps, the chronicles tell us nothing of him, except perhaps his date and his rank. Few there are in the long roll of history who have done compelling deeds that are enrolled for ever in the pages of history. One survives; the remainder are dust.

One marvels at the faith and piety which has erected these monuments, and having passed a quiet hour in their company, walks slowly out of the church. All recollection of the noble knight is quickly chased away by the urgent call of the present. The hour grows late, the day is falling; I leave him to his eternal sleep, and walking softly down the aisle, close the door. I linger for a moment to watch the birds flitting about the ivy-covered tower, to cast a glance over the grey old tombs. I hurry along the deserted lanes and bypaths to reach the link which binds me to times present, and am whirled back to civilisation by a short forty minutes' plunge into the streets of London

with their mighty roar in my ears, their myriad lights flaming into my eyes.

If you would believe in the reality of those recumbent figures you see in cathedral and church, whether they be sculptured in marble or graven on brass, go to the Tower Armoury, and there you will see them as they looked in real life, at the tournament or on the battle-field, clad in the garments of steel made according to the needs and fashions of their time, from the chain mail of the Crusader to the plated suits of Henry the Eighth, burnished like silver, inlaid with gilt, and chased all over with royal monograms and florid tracery, or the more than regal magnificence of the suit of mail worn by Leicester, the famous favourite of Elizabeth. These, however, are for the dazzling court pageant, to please the eye of beauty, to gratify the populace, and have never been dinted by arrow or battle-axe. But they are surrounded by sterner examples which provide a most fascinating study of the crafts of defence and attack. The Crusader lives again

—Creçy and Agincourt, the battles of the Roses, Bosworth, and the Field of the Cloth of Gold. I can see how the knights buckled on their cuirasses, their thigh-pieces, and their arm-plates. I can see how they wore those stiff steel collars they call gorgets; how their skirts of steel were held together. I can see them looking through their vizors; their very fingers are mittened in steel, and grip lance and rein. Some sit astride horses harnessed in steel like their masters, and looking like dragons; others again, fight afoot, and present many a loop-hole to the marksman, for only the leaders had the money to clothe themselves in garments of metal, which had to be so cunningly wrought by the armourer. He must have been a highly skilled artificer, with the eye and the hand and the feeling of an artist, who could never afford to spend his skill on the poor foot soldier. The unarmoured man was not burdened with such heavy loads, and if he ran more risk from bolt or spear, he was not caught in a trap if he fell, like his master, who

would be helpless as a turtle on its back. Yet no one who looks round the walls of the Tower Armoury can say that a man was not wise to protect himself, for they bristle with weapons of every kind that the wit of man could conceive. Ah ! we destroy one another nowadays much more simply, but still khaki, smokeless powder, Maxims, flame-shells, and the rest of the modern armoury have killed Romance and the Picturesque.

There is little doubt that, for the youngster of this capital, the armour, the arquebus, the lance, the cross-bow, the maces and broadswords, the pikes, and the endless collection of murderous weapons which bristle at every turn, have a horrible fascination. It is difficult to get him to move from the mail-clad figures astride their mail-clad horses. You see many a pair of stout little Cockneys, arm in arm, gloating over them with eyes that goggle so that they surely must drop out upon the dusty floor. But if Henry VIII.'s burly form, or Leicester's more elegant figure, or Charles or

James attract them so greatly, depend upon it that the block and axe which loom largely on a table not far off give them thrills even more delightful still. These are, indeed, gruesome objects, for, as you run your finger over the edge of the blade, you may read at the same time how it severed Lord Lovat's head from his body, only a century and a half or so ago. He, too, is said to have run his finger along the edge while he expressed surprise at the number of people who had come to see the taking-off of an old grey head. He was a stout old fellow, who had gambled with his life so long that he cared little for death apparently. On the morning of his execution he said his prayers, he ate a hearty breakfast of minced veal, never trembled when the Sheriffs knocked at the Tower door according to custom and demanded his body, stepped into his carriage, talked with his friends, made no fare-well speech, gave the executioner the handsome sum of ten guineas, put his head on this very solid-looking block which now stands before

you, gave the sign, and made an easy exit from this distracted world. Even that cold and cynical gentleman about town, Horace Walpole, has a good word for his admirable behaviour under such trying circumstances: "Old Lovat . . . was beheaded yesterday, and died extremely well" (!) This is the way they used to talk about executions in those days which are luckily gone. Lovat's head was the last which British axe ever claimed. I have said that no guides bore us here with their sing-song patter, but it is a pity that such gatherings, eager for information, should be so neglected. Surely here is an opening for a new profession—the higher guide, preacher, moralist, historian—there are texts enough to last such a one a lifetime. The Duke of Wellington's coat, the Duke of Marlborough's kettledrums, the coat which the gallant Wolfe wore on the heights of Quebec, the pretty toy cannon which Charles II. used to play with, his small Majesty's miniature coat of mail, his father's suit of gilt armour,—are all interesting enough, but the crowd soon

leaves them to linger over the case of cruel instruments which must have extracted groans and confessions from many a wretched victim. There is a lady (a toy) on the rack ; there are thumbscrews, "scavenger's daughters," bilboes and other horrors, all red with rust. There must be many such hidden away in the dark places of the Tower which none may see, and curiosities by the hundred. But the light is already failing, the crowd clatters down another flight of turret steps, and comes out on to Tower Green, that pretty open space planted with leafy planes, which has been the scene of such bitter anguish. The sightseers hover for many minutes over that small black square, protected from the too curious by iron rails, which marks the place where the fatal scaffold once stood. Anne Boleyn, Katharine Howard, the Countess of Salisbury, Lady Jane Grey, and Essex lost their heads on this spot. Concerning the grey chapel of St. Peter, which stands a few yards away, Macaulay says: "Thither have been carried through successive ages, by the

rude hands of jailers, without one mourner following, the bleeding relics of men who have been the captains of armies, the leaders of parties, the oracles of senates, and the ornaments of courts—in truth, there is no sadder spot on earth than this little cemetery." It is but a step to the Beauchamp Tower, and then up to that gloomy chamber, every stone of which bears some pathetic inscription, done to wile away the weary hours by the unfortunate prisoner. And so end the sights, and we slowly make our way out on to Tower Wharf. The night is falling, the sable sky is flushed with an unearthly pink, the river is steeped in smoke and mists, the London lights are beginning to twinkle through the gloom—and so home—back again into the streets, with the grey old Tower looming ghostlike in the distance. A few minutes later one is back in the roaring Strand, the people are pouring out of the playhouses, lights are aflare in every window. Is it possible?

When I get back to my quiet room, high up,

overlooking a garden and trees, and shut out the world once more, I see my knights and warriors again but as in a dim vision. I try in vain to picture the details of their armour which I thought I had fixed in my mind. I get down my Froissart and turn over the pictures of tournaments and battles which, alas, fill the soul of man with delight, and set his pulses thrilling, and his heart beating with the lust of conflict ; but still I seem to live in a world of romance. The men, the horses, the armour, the lances, the axes, the gay mantles, the fluttering pennons, the bows and daggers, seem to be fancies of the artist,—things of the stage, the pageant, and the Lord Mayor's Show. But the Armoury in the Tower assures you that Froissart and the chroniclers were weaving no romance.

A RELIC OF ROMAN LONDON

ONCE more the City has yielded up its dead. During the demolition of an ancient tavern a few years ago, in the heart of older London, —a tavern once notorious as the haunt of smugglers,—there came to light a fragment of the wall with which the Romans girdled us. A merchant friend whose premises commanded the site invited me to accompany him and a few experts on a visit of inspection, and for a few daylight hours that vestige of Cæsarean days was the prey of cameras and antiquaries and surveyors. Accurate measurements were to be taken before this piece of the ancient wall was reinterred under the foundations of new buildings, and for that brief period of its return to the glimpses of the moon, I was a favoured guest.

I thought of the way in which the chance

had come to me. A telephone ring on a busy day, a cheery voice making the appointment —now or never!—a rush eastwards through the roar and bustle of Cornhill, and a meal together in the still more congested roar and bustle of an old City chop-house. Nevertheless, in amongst the jerky orders and rejoinders of the waiters, and the universal clatter of tongues and knives and forks, my friend pursued lively conversation with his neighbour concerning wines and spirits, and all sorts of excisable liquids and the market fluctuations thereof on a wholesale scale that took my breath away but enlightened me amazingly upon the interests and dealings of this part of the City. I heard that wine generally was "bad," that coffee was no better, that an authority in quite another line altogether declared this very morning there was "nothing doing in minerals." What were people drinking then? I asked, and the reply brought me back from the general tendency to the particular case. I was told of a man

who had looked in at one sample room that morning and had taken a quart bottle of champagne without blinking. This brought up stories of the powers possessed by some of the coopers who worked in bonded stores, as well as the curious and cynical opinion that the casks which leaked most contained the best liquor. In the inferior sorts there was little loss, and I drew my own reflections that excess of opportunity does not abolish temptation, evidently. I looked around the great room where we sat and lunched,—so sombre, with its reflected light coming in from windows looking on to blank walls, but supplied with those shimmering corrugated sheets of glass which make the most of the light that sinks into this narrow well of darkened buildings. Men were coming and going, eating with all the seriousness in the world, reading papers, chatting, scrutinising their bills, or brooding like solitaires in this noisy crowd. It afforded such a strange contrast to the gay little French restaurant "up West," where I had dined the

night before, full of frocks and frills, brilliantly lighted, ringing with laughter and the rattle of French and Italian tongues, smelling deliciously of herbs and salads, resounding to the pop of champagne corks, scented with cigar and cigarette smoke, lined with mirrors and gaudy floral panels. There was the money flying away that was hardly earned hereabouts. Here were the money spinners. Contrast is the sauce of life. What other city in the world holds so many quick changes as London, mighty capital! London the magnificent, the sordid, with its six or seven millions of human beings; polyglot London, city of surprises, of wealth uncountable, bulging with treasures of land and sea and the products of every race!

My host broke in upon my thoughts in his brusque city way: "Time's up," and he looked at his watch. "Now come with me and I will show you the finest piece of Roman wall you have ever seen. It is in the bonded vaults next door to my office." Privately

I thought it was a strange region to find such a vestige of antiquity in, but offered no remark, and descending the creaking old steps under the said office, we crossed over to an arched doorway in the long wall which presented its front to America Square. "Here we are in the bonded vaults," our friend informed us, and I looked about me with much curiosity. Two or three men in uniform, officials of the Custom House, were bending over a monster cask upturned on its end, and higher than any of them. Other workers were engaged with barrels of small dimensions; one or two clerks were making figures on scraps of paper; and I fancied I saw personages moving like phantoms in the gloomy depths that seemed to extend far away in all directions,—strange, eerie, shapeless caverns, their presence faintly indicated by glimmering spots of light. I shuddered, for I seemed to be at the mouth of some vast mediæval dungeon, a fancy no doubt suggested by a chance remark of the merchant friend who, waving his hand, said:

"You see, the Roman wall ran down to the Tower in a pretty straight line." I turned round and peered through the doorway, to see exactly how the Smugglers' Inn stood in relation to us, but the arch of daylight seemed dazzling, and my eyes blinked so that I abandoned the attempt, and we now walked deeper into the caverns. Phew! my nostrils, my eyes, every pore of my skin, were now assailed by the powerful fumes which seemed to gather here,—a generous blend of port and sherry and brandy, and other liquors sweet to the palate of man. As for the strength from which that sweetness proceeded, well, the saturated atmosphere was proof enough of that. I am no strict temperance man, but I would have exchanged all the perfume for a whiff even of London air.

Our guide watched my face and laughed.

"It's no laughing matter," I protested, "for it would be bitter indeed to be carried out as intoxicated when one has not even touched a sip."

Perish the thought! I braced myself up, set my teeth, and we started for darker and more pungent regions yet, when we were met by a phantom to whom I was introduced. He proved to be the Master Cooper, and proved moreover to be possessed of a strong hand, so I was reassured as to his reality. He was to be our Virgil in these Dantean depths; but it was dinner-time for him, and something of a concession to spend it in showing us about. For a phantom he was remarkably amiable; he said he would show us the Roman wall with pleasure.

Two or three jets of gas projected at irregular intervals, and in hang-dog fashion from walls and columns and ceiling, but they merely made the darkness visible, and multiplied the shadows. The difference in their colour, I suppose, was the effect of different fumes, but at any rate, this added to the uncanniness of things, and the Master Cooper appeared as an unearthly object, despite his solidity, until he set light to a tin lamp at the

end of a long handle, and allowed me at last to see that he was real flesh and blood. "This way," he said in a deep voice. "You'd never believe," said my merchant friend, "that when his work is over for the day, he has another calling. He has a fine voice, sings at concerts, and is the leader of a church choir." I confess I should dearly like to hear the songs of a Master Cooper who spends his days in this world of gloom that is so permeated with fiery vapours. They must be melancholy ditties; and his Amens on Sunday must carry conviction at least.

I could hear the tapping of hammers in the distance; I could hear deep echoes, the murmur of voices, and the rumble of rolling tubs, but our footsteps were almost noiseless. We seemed to be walking on some damp, clinging moss that had a clammy touch even through the leather of our boots. I supposed that it was a carpet laid down by the vapours. The walls were covered with black cobwebs;

they hung from the beams and timbers of the low ceiling in dank and hideous festoons, just stirred by the air; and no column or corner seemed free of them. I know not how we came, but we were soon in a long high chamber, permeated by a few faint beams of yellow daylight through a small grated window which seemed to fade away in the presence of the Master Cooper's flickering lamp, which was now raised up before a long high wall extending for a considerable distance.

"This," said he, "is the Roman wall," and he slowly waved his light up and down so that we might examine it. But it was easy to see how massive it was, to note its rugged face, the stones of which it was composed, and the mortar that held them together.

"You came through it," he said, changing the position of his lamp.

We looked through the arch and saw how thick it was.

"There's a hundred feet of it," he added, thrusting his lamp into the gloom. We stared

into it and then followed the light. "It gets thinner as it gets higher." "How high?" "I'll show you in a minute," he answered, "but just look up there."

We followed the rays of the lamp with our straining eyes, and saw a small window which was of a dirty yellow colour, and was crossed by some bars.

"That is daylight," said the Master Cooper. "It is a loophole; see how deep it is. It is the only one that is left. Those are the old bars; the glass is not so old." Here he laughed, possibly thinking of the fantastic notion of the Romans wasting glass on a city wall, if they had had any to spare!

Now we groped our way hither and thither, so that our inspection should be thorough, for we felt that we were in the presence of antiquity, and though you may laugh to think of two or three sane people gazing open-mouthed at a wall encrusted with moist, black, dusty, fungoid deposited by the floating vapours, and hung with black and matted

cobwebs, yet I can assure you it was a valuable lesson in the history of London.

I must confess a warm affection for those ardent souls who devote their wisdom and energy to the exploration of the past. A brick or a stone, a piece of flint or a lump of mortar will provide them with material for many a hot argument. Out of it they strike the spark of truth, and it is only the foolish who laugh at their zeal, and deem so much study unprofitable and childish. I, for one, have always found them the happiest of mortals, and archæology capable of yielding greater and truer pleasure, possibly, than any form of recreation or pursuit which appeals to the meditative mind.

Stalwart navvies, when I came again, were heaving out the soil, but examining it carefully in the hope of discovering some memento of mediæval days, as they stood in the ditch which ran round the outer side of the wall. One of them handed up a fragment of pottery, but nothing more valuable was found that day, —no gold or silver, nothing either ornamental

or useful, but had they been at work in some Australian gold-mine, they could not have been more intent in their scrutinising. Hanging over them was an eminent antiquary who pointed out to us the method of the Roman builders, first the courses of Kentish ragstone, then the binding course of red tiles, and so on to the top, which had disappeared, to be sure, centuries before the Smugglers' Inn was built. These antiquaries have the scent of a bloodhound for such remains as leave the poet unmoved. For years they have had an eye to this corner of America Square and Coopers' Row, knowing full well what precious stones lay buried beneath it, and counting securely on the happy day when time and change would bring them all to light. Many things were active on their side,—rain, soot, damp, sun, wind, and natural decay, and while these operated in their favour, they were content to ignore the treasures of masonry and carving which decorated the houses of the neighbourhood, and excited the curiosity

and desire of another order of collector altogether.

Somehow these enthusiasts seemed butterflies compared with us ; and their animation over their captures seemed trivial beside the long and laudable patience with which these antiquary friends of mine had kept themselves in check. Like the heir waiting anxiously for his portion, so, I dare say, did each of these antiquaries pray for the dissolution of that old hostelry, so that his eyes might rest upon the Roman wall ere he himself was gathered to his fathers, and his goods and "finds" scattered broadcast to the world again. So his pious wish was gratified at last, and my heart truly warmed to such zeal as I saw displayed. Little did the Roman mason ever think that his handiwork would be so admired as though he had been a Phidias ; nor could Euclid have been more careful in his measurements. The camera has taken its records, the artist has made his drawing, the reporter has noted down his facts and figures, and future

generations will be able to read the story in the annals of the past which have been kept so minutely. What a debt we owe to a long succession of those antiquaries who have been burrowing in the soil of London since the days of old Stow, father of all such researches. We all admire the magnificence of new London, its palaces, its halls, its many mansions; we are proud of our wealth and our trade, of the millions of busy workers who fill the greatest city in the world; but as the new warehouses rest on the old inn, and as the old inn rested on the ancient walls, so has one generation its foundation on the other. So much is one the creature of his day that the busy Londoner thinks of these Romans as myths; to me, I confess, they had been shadowy figments of an imagination filled, perhaps, with absurd pictures illustrating school-books or reproducing ancient coins. Henceforth they stand out for me as a live and actual people; I have seen and touched their handiwork, and I know they were real men, with strong muscles and

deft hands, who knew how to build for nearly two thousand years. For two, did I say? Nay, this wall will be there as firm as ever when next it is uncovered, in another hundred years hence. I should say it is immortal.

So I climbed ladders, crossed swaying planks, stepped over many an obstacle, and was once more in the street. When I came to visit the place a few days later, I found to my amazement that a great change had taken place. The new warehouse was rising rapidly, and most of the Roman wall had been covered up by the new foundations. In another day or two it would be hidden from every eye, and none of our time would look at it again. I gazed about me with a sigh, and as I listened to the sound of falling earth, I almost imagined that I was present at a funeral. I took a last look and turned away, for, to tell the truth, even this poor reverie was interrupted and denied me. Dinner-time was striking, twelve o'clock, and the men were hungry. The Roman wall had felt the sun's

warming rays for the last time for many a long year. It had gone to sleep again. When next it sees the heavens, I wonder what our London will look like!

But we were keeping Master Cooper waiting. Let me say that as we retraced our footsteps, we stopped for a moment to gaze up at a row of monster wine-vats bound round with iron staves, and looking like portions of dead giants. But these were none of your Spanish wine-skins, and Don Quixote's doughty sword would have hacked itself to a saw before it had spilt their contents on that mouldy carpet of generations of dust. These contents, to be sure, were countless gallons of good liquor, but have doubtless been consumed ere this, and many many full relays as well. We walked through catacombs to a flight of wooden steps, which we climbed, and found ourselves in a series of upper chambers as dim and ghostly as those below.

The Master Cooper stopped in one of them, and pointed with his lamp once more. "This

is the top of the Roman Wall," he said; "it is the parapet, and this is where the guards did sentry-go."

Lowering his lamp he let us see the narrow stone shelf that projected from the roof of the wall. It was solid as a rock, as I can attest for I proceeded to pace its length myself, as did the legionaries under Cæsar, on sentry bound, hundreds and hundreds of years ago. I tried to say what an object-lesson in history and realised imagination it was, and the Master Cooper seemed gratified.

We now explored many other dungeons, all dark, all festooned with spiders' webs, staring our hardest into corners, now meeting a cooper working at his mysterious craft, doing sums with chalk on barrels, or trundling them out of their cradles. We gazed, awe-stricken and intent, down the long vistas of gloom marked dimly out by the feeble jets of gas which seemed to extend in every direction, and into the very depth of endless caves. It was a strange experience indeed. With our thanks

we expressed our sympathy with our guide, at having forgone his midday meal for our sakes ; but he said he was never hungry. He was so bent on our missing nothing that he directed our attention to a rounded archway in the stonework that we had not noticed. "This," he said, "was the entrance to the secret passage supposed to lead to the Tower." Legend even said that the Duke of Suffolk's head was smuggled this way after his execution ; and many have seen that ghastly relic in its glass case in the vestry-room of St. Botolph's, Aldgate, where it has been removed from the Church of the Holy Trinity in the Minories. Our guide had forgotten the name of the church till I reminded him, but he was at no loss to describe it ; he indicated its position by its nearness to a famous hostelry, and I smiled at the association. After all, every man to his trade.

Finally, as we came back to daylight,—and even a rainy day was uncomfortably dazzling after the Cimmerian darkness of the cellars,—

our Master Cooper said : "There's one thing more," and he disappeared for a minute or two. We heard a knocking, and then he returned with a couple of glasses. "Drink," he said, as he placed a glass in the hand of each of us ; "port : it's been maturing twenty-five years."

"What was that knocking ?" I asked.

"It was flogging the barrel, as we call it."

This puzzled me.

"We hit the barrel, the bung comes out, and we put this in." He held out a long conical pin, not unlike a coachman's horn, except that it was not so large.

"That is a Valencia." (He called it a "falinch," and the French call it a "tâte-vin" or wine-taster.) "We put it in the bunghole, and by placing a finger on the top, it brings away a portion of wine as we withdraw it." One lives and learns, and this present world is an improvement, in its way, upon the times when the Romans came to stir us up. We bade him good-day.

A later excursion on another day showed

me something of America Square, a quarter which you will not find in the usual reference books and guides to London. We passed the Bank, went along Cornhill and Gracechurch Street, then off Fenchurch Street; we dived down a narrow entry which leads by a short cut round a little green garden with an old church tower in it, and so along another passage cut through a cluster of offices, and by crossing a road emerged into another open square. I was sure of my way now, and going down a short flight of steps, reached St. Olave's Church, where the stone skulls grin at you from the top of a rusty old gateway, and where they still show you the beautiful marble monument Sam Pepys erected to his handsome wife, and the companion memorial our generation has put up to Samuel himself, just near the old Navy Office gallery where the diarist used to sit. Turn down another long and gloomy street between blocks of warehouses, under bridges, and past yawning vaults and courtyards, and at last you arrive

in America Square. Its name falls strangely on the ear, somehow suggesting the sea, ships, sailors, wharves, and the fabulous trading profits of days before America began to discover things for herself. But I must confess its appearance disappointed me, for it was a scene of chaos. I saw a large open space which was almost filled with carts, drays, and waggons, drawn up in very regular order, the horses' heads being turned to the narrow street we were in. I stopped to look round me, and from what I saw imagine that in old days America Square must have justified its name, for there still remained a quaint house of three or four storeys now evidently used as offices, with a school, strange to say, to leaven the mixture. It was a school for two classes of children, younger and older, as a legend in gold letters showed which one read on the discoloured wire blinds that hid the interior. I was puzzled to know whence the pupils could come, for the population of the City in these days is, I always understood, confined to

caretakers. At any rate, it gave a homely and a human touch to what was else a wilderness of trade and traffic. On the opposite side I saw a new building rising through scaffold poles, and the high bare end wall—which seemed as if it might easily tumble over into the new building coming into existence below—of two or three dingy old houses. The end of the Square was composed of walls and a yawning cavern-like interior from which casks and barrels were being rolled to the vehicles in waiting. Such then was the appearance of the strangely named America Square, and when I went again chaos had given place to further transformation. Much of that region of old wine-merchants' offices and the rest of it had been swept away by the new London harbour scheme; the London Museum had seized a few relics of house architecture and decoration; and America Square is no longer what it was. So the modern perishes and the old remains; and my thoughts went back to the Roman wall, as I revolved the irony of things.

TWO CITY COMPANIES

THERE is a kind of magic in places that transforms an everyday experience into a memorable event. It raises a smile perhaps to set on record so ordinary an occurrence as an invitation to tea, even when the invitation comes from a City Father, but as the venue was the hall of a famous City Company, it seems worth while to set down the many points of interest that it revealed. Among the many old trade guilds of London, the Barber-Surgeons is one of the most ancient and honourable,—or worshipful, whichever is the more civic term,—partly that it commemorates the origins of a great profession, and partly that the Company is rich in many enviable possessions and things of pride. One of the oldest, too, it sedulously preserves certain time-honoured customs amid

the storm and stress of modern life. Time and change, however, have taken a mean kind of revenge, for if they could not obliterate these venerable halls by superseding them, they have raised barriers and rival buildings round them on a more pretentious scale, until by these days structures which were considered imposing for their bygone era have become dwarfed by the tall and many-storeyed warehouses of City firms which by comparison may be creatures of yesterday, or the day before. The Blue Coat School has avoided this indignity by moving away to the uplands of Horsham, achieving a double victory by selling the old site for a mint of money, and setting up its tabernacle in healthy and beautiful surroundings where it "knows the old no more." Gone from the precincts of Newgate are the well-loved roofs and blackened cloisters, and in their place is a cluster of buildings of immaculate stone and brick dedicated to the postal services and the cult of St. Martin-le-Grand. But a closer inspection, especially

while the builders are still busy, shows how the new fashion is replacing the old materials with slabs of cement, moulded into walls and staircases, and robbing the name of builder of half its older meaning. I saw rising before me, laid in long rows, tier above tier, sections of small rooms all of exactly the same shape and size, and having the appearance of a vast collection of warmed and ventilated pigeon holes. Of course, the outer wall of this new fabric had yet to be formed, and this would doubtless find its vesture of ornament, and thus deceive the world as to the true nature of its construction. No one can very well decry these swift, modern methods by which time and money are saved for the public benefit, but it is impossible for the poor pilgrim who has come to pay his devotions to the antique to restrain a few sighs as he thinks of the ancient buildings they have replaced to meet the needs of the times. So it is, too, with famous men whose names are honoured words. Their memory soon fades away like a puff of smoke before

the wind, and others' names soon trip readily from the end of our tongue.

Still musing, I reached the end of a narrow passage, and found myself in the deep and heavy-browed porch of an old black church which was enclosed among warehouses, and lingered there for a few minutes to read the memorial tablets that hung on the walls and columns, erected there by mourning relatives, and setting forth the virtues of the dead in letters long since rounded and encrusted by decay. I suppose the worthy men and women thus commemorated are those that lie at peace beneath the damp stones in the graveyard yonder at the end of the porch behind a rusty row of railings, and bounded by the backs of shops and the immense blocks of government premises rushed into existence in this new-fangled fashion. Their graves are almost hidden in the rank grass, in leaves that have fallen from the plane trees bordering the central walk, and by the clustering ivy. It is a scene that calls forth all one's philosophy,

for it admonishes even the most just and upright of men how soon they are forgotten. The bell in the tower above me tolled its funereal note ; through this old porch the mourners walked with downcast eyes, the priest read the last rites, the tear-watered earth fell upon the coffin, the will was read, grief indited an epitaph, the heir succeeded to his heritage. Then his own time came in due course, other generations followed him and went the way of their fathers. Now all that remains to tell us that they once walked the earth are these neglected stones, over which, in a year or so, I dare say, the errand boys will be playing leap-frog when the graveyard has become a city garden.

I fled, and plunging into the full tide of the throng, banished all thought of those dead worthies, for here in the press of men he who would not perish must take good heed. Joining my companion at the appointed hour and place, we turned down Aldersgate Street, then along Falcon Street, and soon reached the

narrow little thoroughfare where stands the Hall of the Barber-Surgeons. We were now in a region of lanes and courts crowded with people, and in that vista of shops and offices and warehouses we looked in vain for any sign of an antique building, so that we passed its entrance more than once before a well-placed question put us right. In the course of our perambulations up and down that narrow street we chanced upon a narrow archway and, passing through it, found ourselves to our surprise in the walk which winds through the graveyard of St. Giles's, Cripplegate. At that moment the clock in its grey old tower struck three, the quaint notes of a carillon played "Caller Herrin'," and clerks and messengers hurrying past, slackened their pace to listen to the plaintive old air, which sounded so strangely in this huddle of ill-assorted buildings almost at the City's very heart. Great is the power of such simple music. I am sure the carillon of St. Giles's must give a few and refreshing moments to the hosts who toil within earshot.

Here is a veritable oasis in the desert of brick and mortar; the churchyard grass is green and closely shaven; there are flowers growing among the tombs; the walls are edged with ivy, and the sun shines upon an ancient bastion of the wall that once girdled the City round. As we stood in a quiet angle surveying the scene, I suddenly remembered a visit I had paid to this graveyard years ago with the police officers who come every night with lanterns to explore its recesses in search of thieves and others, for the windows of many offices look down upon this spot. One of my guides on that occasion, I remember, turned his lantern and threw a vivid disc of light upon the ivy, and thrusting his free hand down, brought it up again full of human bones. The sight of them startled me, I confess, for it was in the still, small hours of the night, and darkness loomed over all things, quick and dead. But judge of my surprise when he showed me that the path was sown thick with bones which I suppose were the remains of the thousands

who died of the great plague in 1665, for here, in Cripplegate, it raged furiously as the old books of the churchwardens show. However, the public wayfarer never penetrates to this portion of the graveyard, so no relic hunter can gratify his mania. We went into the church for a minute or two, to see the grave of Milton whose dust lies at the foot of the chancel steps, and who lived close at hand here. Those were the troubled times when the great Puritan sought to do his duty by the young generation as a tutor, and to his fellow-reformers in many a tract which startled even them by its outspokenness,—all this, moreover, in the midst of such troubles with his wife's Cavalier family as must have called for all his strength and serenity of mind.

We soon learned that our difficulty of search has long been a common one with the Company's unescorted visitors, for the Hall lay at the end of a long vaulted passage to be approached only through a gate of wrought iron let into a block of comparatively modern

offices facing upon the street. Crossing a flagged court we entered the Company's Hall, a small and unostentatious building of brick with long windows, imprisoned by towering warehouses at one end, but showing at the other end a handsome and stately door over which projected a richly carved coat of arms, gilt and painted, and leading into the old mansion consecrated to the Company's uses and treasures. The upper part of the door was filled with glass, and when opened admitted us to a dark passage, and thence into a vestibule of the Hall itself. Once inside I could not restrain my surprise at its beautiful proportions, and the richness of its decorations, and could scarce believe that it lay but a few hours away from the busy and crowded streets. Yet the crowning impression was not so much one of an ancient and well-preserved architectural beauty as of homely comfort and quiet dignity, and even of friendly and hospitable warmth. A chamber worthy of a palace, and yet a parlour where a family might live to hold

its most private gatherings,—this was a combination of attractions rare indeed. The walls were hung with oil paintings set in heavy frames of gilt; the ceiling was pierced with an octagonal cupola rich in decoration; and this shed a subdued light on the long table beneath, at the head of which stood a throne-like chair with curious arms and high carven back, behind which hung a large shield showing the arms of the Company. A fire burned on the hearth enclosed by a fine old mantelpiece above which rose a portrait of some great lady, whilst an old sideboard, a number of chairs, and a small side-table or two completed the furniture. These details, however, give but a faint idea of the appearance of this delightful old hall; for doors, architraves, cornices, pilasters, coats of arms, a glass chandelier, the long red curtains hanging over the windows, and many other features contributed to its rich but placid beauty.

Now the sheen of gold and silver fell on my wandering eyes, for set out upon the end of

the long table were a number of tall cups and other pieces of plate; whilst upon the mantel-shelf were large silver dishes and a row of four curious articles with rims of beaten silver and soft velvet covers, which looked rather like very large and elaborate pincushions. I was completely at a loss to know what they could be until my host, laughing, took one in his hands and placed it on his head, when I exclaimed "they must be crowns!"

"They are," he answered. "The Wardens wear them when the Court sits."

"The Court?" I was more perplexed than ever.

"This is the Court House," he explained, and then, with a crown still on his head, he told me how the Court was the name given to the senior members of the Company, who themselves elected the Master and Wardens, and it was in this beautiful old chamber that they sit in conclave to settle all their affairs. I had often read of these famous trade guilds, which in mediæval times exercised the closest

and most exacting scrutiny into the concerns, each of its own trade as well as of those who practised it. They vigilantly protected the interests of all from outsiders, who would have poached upon its preserves and robbed it of its profits ; they fixed the prices of productions, wherever possible, and punished offenders who brought it into discredit by giving short measure or defrauding customers in the way of adulteration. Great indeed was the power of the guild, and difficult to realise in free-trade days, but these old-world surroundings help one to picture them as a whole case full of dusty antiquarian tomes could never have done.

This old room was built by Inigo Jones. The flames of the Great Fire of Charles the Second's time have lapped its walls, and did, indeed, actually consume the vestibule and other portions of the premises. If you would go back further you need only lift your eyes to Holbein's picture of Henry the Eighth giving the charter of the Company to a grave and reverend Company of Barber-Surgeons,

who kneel before him in ruffs and cloaks. The painting—one of the best-preserved and most covetable and famous Holbeins extant,—hangs above the sideboard, and is the Company's most treasured possession. In those times the City was coterminous with London, and the overgrown metropolis that we know to-day was a conception that occurred only to madmen or poets. In the City's narrow lanes and winding streets its citizens lived and died; they worshipped in its old churches; they were buried in the local graveyards. These old halls, therefore, were familiar to them as the churches and formed a necessary part of their daily lives. The youth came to them to be enrolled as apprentices and learners of a craft; the elders administered its business and its revenues. In those days the City must have been a picturesque place to live in,—crowded, perhaps, but full of life and colour, and almost as noisy as it is to-day,—though the sounds that filled the air would be those of contending tradesmen crying out their wares, each under

his own sign, and not the rattle of horses' feet, the hooting of motors, the heavy rumble of omnibuses, or the rush of taxi-cabs. The air was clearer, except for the pungent smell and smother of wood smoke, perhaps; the dresses were of bright colours and endless variety; pageants were common and sights were many. This is not to say that the City of London to-day does not offer a vast amount of entertainment of other kinds, or that it can ever fail to fill any one with amazement at its multitudinous activities. But it is only on Lord Mayor's Day and other special occasions that its chosen citizens appear in their wonderful finery, and even then your practical man is apt to mock and compare them with play-actors and circus-riders.

Here in this old parlour, one cannot resist the appeal of the antique, but yet my host, a staid man of affairs, is under no illusion regarding his crown and the long black cloak edged with sable, which he has just put on for my pleasure, and he admits that such a garb would

not suit modern business requirements. He smiles at this quaint raiment now, but in mediæval days sumptuary laws were no laughing matter, and badges and symbols were as printed signs fraught with meaning, and recognised as such by an unlettered population. Henceforth I shall uphold with all the strength I possess the preservation of these old evidences which link us to the dim past and present us with an eloquent lesson on English history and the development of ideas.

Nothing would serve my host but I must don both crown and cloak, and I assure you that I became at once conscious of a sense of dignity and importance equal to rebuking the unruliest of apprentices, addressing a gathering of liverymen, or welcoming a monarch in a manner that would have done credit to any corporation. Indeed, so emboldened was I for the moment that nothing would satisfy me but to take a seat on the throne-like chair sacred to the Master of the Company, and gazing down upon an imaginary assembly, picture to myself

a king or a Lord Mayor whose feelings of responsibility I now felt able for the first time to realise. Never again will I laugh at robes and coronets, at ceremonies and genuflections, at etiquette and courtly fashions. It was a lesson well worth the learning. I had just stepped down from my high place, suffering something like the pangs of a usurper, and resigned my honours and glories to their owner, when we were joined by a second citizen, as the term goes in the language of historical plays,—a gentleman of Middlesex who was one of the most typical embodiments of our national type that I ever remember to have seen. He was presented to me as the greatest living authority on the affairs of the Barber-Surgeons, at which he smiled grimly, and muttering a few words in response, took off his coat and silk hat, and sat down at the table with a deep sigh. He explained that he had had a busy morning, and had hurried here without having eaten since breakfast. He helped himself to dry buscuits and a syphon

of soda—very different fare from that with which the Companies are credited,—utterly indifferent to the playful jests of the first citizen, who was of a more mercurial temperament. They were evidently on the friendliest of terms, but as I soon discovered took opposite sides in politics, as appeared by their conversation even when they were discussing the affairs of the Company. Though the second citizen was content with a tardy lunch which a monk might well decline on a Friday, and was rather serious of countenance, he was an ardent lover of the feasts that are occasionally given in the Court Room, and are paid for from the Company's revenues. The first citizen urged the claims of education and charity, though even he was by no means averse from the pleasures of the table. Both, however, were devoted to the interests of the Company, and it was pleasant to hear them expatiating on its history and its legends. Our second citizen, having now munched the last of the biscuits, rose and got from the side-board a large and heavy

volume which he placed upon the table, and began to turn over the leaves. It contained the history of the Company, and had been compiled after years of research by the second citizen himself, so it was with much pride that he showed us his learned notes, the pedigrees of famous barbers he had drawn up, the reproduction of old documents bearing on the subject, written in crabbed Latin and inscribed in Old English lettering which I found most difficult to decipher. I had at last lighted on a fervid antiquary who had produced a work that is accepted as a final authority, and I now regarded him with almost veneration. He knew every line in the first volume, he had stories about his discoveries, about the pictures and plate, and, looking at the precious Holbein, pronounced in quick succession the names of the surgeons who knelt at the feet of Henry the Eighth, supplementing them with anecdotes and sprinkling all manner of odd facts about them into his narrative.

Drawing a lovely silver-gilt loving-cup towards him, and holding it up in his hands, he said: "Now, would you believe that five men have been hanged for that cup? It is a beauty, isn't it? It was given to us by Henry the Eighth. Look at the Tudor rose and the portcullis engraved at the bottom of the bowl; you will find in Pepys' Diary a description of this very cup and the bells around it, for he came here in the February of 1663, and was entertained, as he tells you, to excellent surgical discourse about the kidneys and the lungs, and also (which was better still) to 'a fine dinner and good learned company.' He drank out of this cup, and says so; but he is only one of many famous men who have been guests here. This cup could tell you some stories, if it had only a tongue. It was stolen once, and, as I said, five men were hanged for the robbery. Then it was pawned when Cromwell levied a tax upon us, and afterwards redeemed. What is it worth? Why,

thousands of pounds. Look at the beautiful old work upon it."

It is indeed a treasure, small though it be,—about six inches across, about as many high, and standing on an elegant foot, and having a shapely lid, and little bells which tinkle pleasantly as Pepys duly notes, when the cup is passed from hand to hand around the table. "Turn the lights up," said the second citizen, "so that everybody can see it better." So the switches clicked and lo, the old parlour was flooded with electric light, sparkling from a score of points, greatly to the display of its beauty and fine proportions.

"Now," he said, drawing another loving-cup towards him, "that was given to us by Charles the Second in a fit of unusual generosity, for he was more accustomed to accept presents than to make them, being as you know, an impecunious sort of monarch." Here the second citizen smiled with a world of meaning, being moved out of his usual imperturbability. This was a larger cup than

Henry's, of silver richly chased, and also furnished with those queer little tinkling bells. So each piece of plate was brought to our notice,—a silver cock with diamond eyes, a rose bowl given to the Company by good Queen Anne, some gifts of Past Masters,—like the second citizen,—and a row of six more loving-cups of plainer make, but each possessing some interest and association. We also tapped the table with the silver-tipped mallet which had been used by many a Master to keep order at the Company's Courts, though it is too precious to be handled now, and a replica is used instead. We examined other rare objects and scrutinised the pictures on the walls,—a portrait of Inigo Jones, others of Barber-Surgeons long since gathered to their fathers, of Queen Anne herself, a Lely over the mantelpiece which represented the Duchess of Richmond; and the splendid Reynolds portrait of a former Clerk to the Company,—a truly handsome and dignified picture rich in colour and tone,—which came to it through

the rare luck, spirit and enterprise of his successor of to-day. More of this presently. We duly admired the stately chairs, the heraldic emblems, some fine old china on the sideboard, the screens and other luxuries, and in fact passed all the furniture under a close scrutiny as we made our tour of the premises. Meanwhile the second citizen played the cicerone in his dry and quizzical manner, pointing his story with all sorts of quaint facts about the Company and its members. And as we passed in towards tea our attention was drawn to a little closet off the vestibule, in one of whose walls was inset the safe where all this treasure we had examined is kept. We talked at length and in much detail of the measures that are taken to guard all this treasure, and although it seemed a problem in such a place, where Saturdays and Sundays leave the City all but deserted, and there is nothing but the ringing of bells to tell the world that these regions are inhabited, I was soon satisfied that burglars stand a poor chance

at the Barber-Surgeons' Hall, and even if they entered they would be at a loss to dispose of their booty. Thieves know well that there is nothing so hard to sell as a famous picture like the Holbein, and that the famous loving-cups, if melted up, would hardly repay them for their night's trouble since the value is not in their weight but in their age and shape.

The sill under the stained-glass windows lighting the vestibule, I learned, rests upon some fragments of the old London wall. Those famous stones rise up and confront me wherever I go! I have seen them in a vestry, beneath an old inn in a churchyard, and in the gloom of a bonded vault, and I was once promised a tile of it by a friend who is now no more. It would have been well worth enclosing in a well-shaped frame of mellow mahogany, and kept as a great curiosity, fit to revive at sight vivid memories of our pleasant excursions in London byways.

From the hall rose a fine oak staircase, rich and spacious, which led to the upper apartments

of the old mansion adjoining the Court House, and ascending it, we found ourselves in a quaint and rather sombre parlour with panels and walls of a dark brown hue, hung with old engravings and portraits,—the kind of room our forebears loved, and with good reason, for it seemed to extend a kindly welcome and the promise of substantial hospitality. In such a room I can imagine Pepys living at ease, surrounded by comforts and a certain amount of state. A cheerful fire was burning, the table was spread, and seating ourselves round it we talked of the good old days. Over tea our second citizen became more and more communicative, and called up fresh relays of information from his well-stored memory. His profession in the City had led him easily into these favourite lines of research, and he made these antiquarian diversions his holidays. He will expend as much energy and eloquence in an argument about the name of an old street or the position of an old churchyard as he would on the value of "ancient lights" to

a client. I laughed to myself to see so much zeal over what the younger generation would dub a trifle. What is it to us in these roaring times whether we call the immortal diarist of Carolean times Pep, Peeps, or Peppys? But the second citizen has decided opinions. Nor, again, does it seem of vast importance whether the father of London antiquarians and topographers, the famous Stow, was sometimes a little loose about his facts and his derivations. But the first citizen pounded him well, exposed the falsity of his statements, and yet wound up by admitting that we owe a good deal to old Stow. Our friend was deeply learned, of course, in the lore of the Barbers Company; he knew by heart the punishments inflicted upon offending barbers' apprentices, and gave us a variety of illustrations which were very amusing to listen to, but must have been extremely unpleasant to the offenders at the time. He pointed to a faded old painting on the walls of a Barber-Surgeon in his robes, and said it was taken from the Court Room to

make way for his own portrait, as indeed I had noticed with a smile, thinking that many years must elapse before the smoke and fumes would mellow its rather garish appearance, when perhaps it might be worthy of its fellows. I was greatly diverted by the semi-vanity of our second citizen who would take down an old painting and replace it by a new one of himself, but he seemed quite innocent of suspicion that he had laid himself open to any such taunt, and though he criticised the new work from the standpoint of art, evidently thought it entitled to a prominent place amongst the worthies of the Company.

Then he told me of the way in which the Sir Joshua was obtained. "One of our members heard that this old Clerk of the Company, as painted by Reynolds, was coming up at an auction, and having first ascertained that it was indeed a genuine portrait, sent for an old cashier who had been in his service for many years, and instructed him to attend the sale, thinking that the picture might go for the

proverbial song, being in poor condition and not representing any particular celebrity. So the cashier went on the appointed day, with permission to bid as much as ten or twenty or even thirty pounds for the interesting relic. But to his amazement the bidding started at twenty, and steadily rose. Unable to resist the temptation, the cashier joined in the battle, and at last secured the picture for a hundred and fifty pounds, or thereabouts.

"Then he woke up from his dream. 'What have I done?' he exclaimed. 'What ever have I done?' So with head bowed down and leaden feet he made his way back to the City, and appeared before his master, who got the facts out of him with difficulty. 'What shall we do?' he cried; 'the Court will never pay it!' But they did, and indeed they would have been angered if the picture had escaped their hands." For experts say it is a perfect specimen of Reynolds at his best, and besides being a superbly handsome piece which is admirably adapted for the

Company's walls by its character and pedigree and associations, it is pronounced by good judges to be worth several hundred pounds. That cashier must have had a Jew's eye for a bargain, after all.

Coming away, we peeped through the stained-glass windows into the corner of Cripplegate Churchyard in which I had seen the grey bones of the sufferers from the plague; and then we paused to admire the great brass chandelier with its many arms which hung from the roof, and the roomy wardrobe in which the sable-trimmed cloaks of the members were stored. Within its capacious depths the first and second citizens forgot their appointments for a moment and entered into a lively dispute about the cost of the furs, naming sums that surprised me. Another closet contained further interesting articles, namely, shelves full of glasses, etc., and I learned all about the resources of the cellars. Thence we passed down the echoing corridors to the entrance hall, on whose walls were hung

the boards inscribed with the names of the Company's benefactors, the first of whom lived some five hundred years ago, and the second citizen assured me that he had the original deeds in his keeping.

The stately housekeeper curtseyed politely as we went into the courtyard, and down the vaulted passage into Monkwell Street. It was like sailing out of a quiet haven into a roaring gale. The narrow street emerges into a space that is comparatively wide, a meeting-place of other lanes, and here a squad of over a hundred telegraph boys were drawn up under the light of the lamps, this being their rendezvous for some march out to drill-hall or inspection, a crowd of clerks, messengers, and business men having gathered to watch them. These lads have taken the place of the 'Prentices of the olden times, and are much more orderly and law-abiding, I am sure. We passed with difficulty, and made our way through Aldersgate Street to the Post Office, now at the height of its activities. We wound

into St. Paul's Churchyard, all aflare, and crowded with people who were gazing into the shop windows, buying from the hawkers of the pavement, and enjoying the hum and the roar. The Cathedral loomed up above us, like the side of a mountain, heavy-browed, all-embracing, and brooding like a god over the passing men and women who filled the streets below. Ludgate Hill was ablaze, and the lamps painted thousands of faces in lurid hues, until they all seemed like poor souls moving on the confines of a nether world, and flying this way and that to escape their doom. Taken one by one, they represented every class and variety in the community,—the rich merchant, the miserable pedlar crying his penny wares, the fine dame searching for some novelty to tempt her to open a well-filled purse, the shivering beggarman, and the soldier with his medals and his bright tunic, the sailor home on leave, the sister of charity, the pretty work-girl, the whistling errand boy. It was a remarkable company, not so select or so

homogeneous as the Barber-Surgeons, but universal in its variety, and ancient truly, in its representative character and in the picture it afforded of the human side of London.

On another day when we got an invitation to hear a lecture at Clothworkers' Hall, we were ignorant,—like most Londoners, I fancy,—as to where exactly the building was to be found. We found it almost as modest as the Barber-Surgeons', for we had to discover its gateway in a dark and narrow City lane, as before, and went down a long corridor, all gilt and alight, before we reached our destination. Such is London ; one may pass a famous building a hundred times and never know of its existence, or rather its proximity, being always busy with some other destination in view. At the end of the corridor were two swinging doors through which we saw a fine and spacious hall, from which ascended a wide staircase. Two beadles in livery,—that is, with silk hats girdled by coloured ribbon, a tail coat cut away, and a coloured waistcoat,—stood on

each side of the doors, and passing them, we entered, and on giving a card up, were allowed to proceed. To ascend the staircase was to admire its proportions,—the gilding, the marble, the mirrors, and oil paintings; and when we entered the Great Hall, it was already nearly full, mainly of ladies. Once seated, we continued to admire the splendours around us. Walls and ceiling were richly gilt, the frieze and cornices, the capitals and marble columns were excellently proportioned for display, and the decoration had been laid on with a lavish hand to gratify the citizens who form so influential a Company. At the end facing us was a raised platform, set in an arched and rounded apse, and concluding in a high mirror flanked by two knightly figures. At the opposite end was a sort of baldacchino, as if to break the monotony of the walls, and here again rose a mirror, thus giving the Hall the appearance of still greater length than it possessed, and multiplying into long vistas the lights of the great chandeliers. Heraldic

emblems heightened the impression of wealth and age and dignity, whilst the great fire blazing on the hearth seemed to indicate the prodigal hospitality which the Company was well disposed and able to extend to its guests.

Though it was but a lecture, I was amused by the settled form and ceremony which preceded it. One or two speakers rose and in measured tones made their little speeches, and one gathered some notion of the meetings, the committees, and the various magnates who had conferred together to prepare for this very simple entertainment that had been provided. So, I am sure, in calling up the past, it is well to imagine that the most was made of every occasion which brought people together, and nothing of importance was done without formality, speeches and ceremonial. When the lecture was over, we descended the staircase and made a tour of the great foyer from which there opened out the rooms of the Company. The walls were hung with views of old London, photographs and paintings,

while their upper portions were covered with many shields which another visitor told us bore the arms of all the Masters of the Company in order of time. The Hall, we learned, was built some fifty years ago on the site of the old one, which was burnt down, and our attention was drawn to a large gilt life-sized ram—the Company's emblem—carved in wood or cast in metal,—I know not which,—standing under the stairs. This is an old heirloom of the Clothworkers. I asked whom the figures adorning the main upper-hall represented, and learned that these were of the two most illustrious members of the Company, James the First and Charles the First. They tell a quaint story of the unceremonious way in which James entered the privileged circle. Looking round the hall one day during a pleasant visit, he asked, "And who is the Master of your Company?" The Lord Mayor, standing by, told him "Sir William Stone." "And will you have me for a Clothworker?" asked the modern Solomon.

"Yea," quoth the Master heartily, "and think myself a happy man that I live to see this day." "Stone," rejoined the king, "Give me thy hand; and now I am a Clothworker." Not all kings have had the bluff simplicity to give so much pleasure to worthy subjects in such a few words, and one hopes his Majesty showed himself worthy of his Company.

CHARTERHOUSE AND THE POOR BROTHERS

THE last and only monastic building in London to retain anything of the collegiate character is the Charterhouse, for we can hardly count the Temple, inasmuch as it has passed over from the care of the Church to the charge of the law, and even a lawyer would admit the difference. There have been various schemes for reviving in some form or other the order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and establishing the new dispensation on the site of the old around the famous gate of St. John at Clerkenwell. But here again the gap and the transition from the old to the new would be impossible of concealment and in no way would the experiment appeal to us, however successful. It would lack the long continuity which hangs like a halo about the Poor Brothers who find a shelter

on the site of the old Carthusian monastery near Smithfield, or, as it was once called, "No Man's Land," until the Black Plague arrived with its wholesale burials, and after that in consequence by the pious name of "Pardon Churchyard." But for six centuries now, the place has been christened after the good friars of St. Bruno of Chartreux, near Grenoble. Part of what was taken from them and their successors at the Dissolution has been given back to the laity in the form of a hospital for men of good record but perished fortunes, and Thackeray has crowned the benevolent arrangement in one of the tenderest and most beautiful chapters in literature, so there is no chance of our forgetting the Charterhouse and its charities again.

The touch of antiquity meets you at the very gate. You leave the roar of Holborn and Smithfield behind, and enter under a broad Gothic archway crowned by an incongruous addition of modern wall and windows, but once within, you find yourself in a cloistered

world where all is gloom and mystery. A slight fog still hung over town on the day when I made the first of the series of visits I am about to describe, and this softening of the atmosphere crept into every one of those monastic nooks and crannies of the Charterhouse,—its black passages, darkening courts and low doorways,—and though a few lamps were planted about the grounds, their pale glimmer lent all too little assistance to one who was a comparative stranger. The great gate was open and in the court were a few boys in Eton jackets and collars, with a special touch about their dress, for it was Founder's Day. I saw a waiter, too, standing in a dim doorway, and looking as strangely out of place as those boys from the new and transplanted Charterhouse at Godalming, come up to sing in honour of the pious founder, good Thomas Sutton. The diamond windows of the great Hall were also lit up, and it was evident that some festivity was in progress. We made our way to the door of the Brother we knew, Captain ——,

and ascending the staircase, knocked and entered in obedience to a stentorian welcome. His room looked the picture of comfort, for a large fire was burning, the curtains were drawn, the brass lamp was lit and set in the middle of a bright red tablecloth, and the play of the flames was reflected in the glass of every picture. But more of this enticing interior later on. We sat and chatted for a few minutes and then he put on his gown, and we walked through the cloisters to the Chapel. In one of the darkest corners was a very old gentleman trying in vain to put on his cloak. "Would you help me to put it on?" he said, so we stopped to oblige him, and after the heavy garment had been assumed and adjusted, we went on through the darkness, our footsteps arousing loud echoes. The Captain told me that the old Brother we had encountered used to be at the British Museum. We passed in and out of a number of dark doorways and cloisters and through the Hall, where the tables were spread for the feast of the Old Carthusians.

The snowy cloth, the flowers and silver seemed garish amid the sober oak, the rich carving, the panelled walls, the oriel windows, and the vast fireplace; but we had no time to linger, for the bell was tolling and the Chapel filling.

The Captain had secured a pew near Sutton's tomb, and we took our seats to watch the Brothers coming in, one or two of them with friends from the outside world, but all imposing in their venerable and senatorial costume. I was struck by the massive head of the Brother who sat in the next pew to our own, and ascertained that he was a naval veteran. He was broadly built, and must have had great strength in his early days, but now his back was bowed, his head nearly white, and one of his eyes was glazed and evidently sightless. A little lady sat by his side whom I took to be his daughter, and as they chatted quietly together, I also guessed that the Poor Brother was deaf. The Brothers having taken their seats, there was a clatter of feet, and the boys came trooping in, all in

evening dress, dividing themselves into two parties, one in the Monks' Chapel, the other in that of Norfolk's time—that is to say, the Duke who bought the place in Elizabeth's reign. This hapless noble, having engaged in a plot to rescue Mary Stuart, went to the scaffold, and his son sold the property again to Thomas Sutton,—the soldier whose benevolence was to lift him out of a whole host of benefactors, and stamp him irrevocably on Carthusian minds as Fundator Noster.

The procession of boys was followed by that of their school predecessors, the "Old Carthusians," ranging in age from twenty to fifty, the youthful and the grizzled. The clergy then entered, and the service began. It lasted an hour, and was simplicity itself,—a familiar hymn, the General Confession and Absolution, a special psalm, the Lessons and Creed, the appropriate versicles and responses, and then the Founder's Prayer. This rendered thanks for his life and deeds, and asked grace to "answer the pious design of our munificent

benefactor by using the great blessing and advantage we enjoy to the honour and glory of Thy Name, the good of mankind and the salvation of our own souls." The sermon was equally to the point, but before it began, we had perhaps the most characteristic and beautiful of all the Charterhouse hymns, the "Auctor omnium bonorum," a devout old Latin poem in the true spirit of the Sarum and other canticles which so many have tried to translate and with such poor success. It was sung by the choir to a richly harmonised but simple setting, and the air made wonderful and devotional melody, I can tell you, in that churchful of greybeards and boys.

The service could not have been more appropriate to the occasion, marked as were the contrasts it had to embrace and satisfy, especially one's pathetic thoughts of old Brothers, their lives almost spent, looking at the blithe youths in the choir with all their life ahead. Service over, all trooped out into the cloisters where are the memorials to

Thackeray and John Leech, as well as the one to fallen Carthusians in the Crimea, the Mutiny, and other "old, unhappy, far-off" wars. To think of these old brethren living out their terms of monotony, and sitting in daily contemplation of the end, was to grow melancholy oneself. I heard a visitor say to a friendly Brother: "You must be mournful sometimes," and he answered: "Ah, but we've many consolations." And when I hearkened to the echoes of that service I felt the secret of it all, and the brave spirit of religion that can draw the fangs of death itself.

We mounted the Elizabethan staircase, and admired the tapestries; we passed on to the gallery and its minstrels, grouped round the choirmaster at the piano. Here again was consolation rich and lasting, for there is nothing appeals to the sensible and reflective mind like "music at the close." We saw the feast in noisy progress, and the venerable Master at the head of the table, occupying his chair with a grave, smooth dignity, and

lighting up as one after another of the "old boys" came up to pay their respects and show their gratitude to the ancient foundation. As we depart the boys are singing a stately grace, and for the present we leave the Captain to enjoy the capon and bottle of wine which are for each of the Poor Brothers the distinguishing mark of Founder's Day.

There are many points of beauty to admire about the precincts of the Charterhouse, and one does not bring them all into focus at a single visit. On another occasion I chanced upon many new things of interest, from the pretty avenue which leads to the great gate of the Hospital, to the lions with scrolls which adorn the pediment above the gate, and represent the armorial badge of the ducal donor of Elizabethan days. An old man was gathering up a harvest of fallen leaves and I stood and watched him, thinking of the past of this old home of benevolence and mystery. Only a few dark courts and rooms now remain to remind us of its history, but

I know that beneath those dead leaves lie the dust of thousands of plague-stricken victims swept away by the terrible visitation of 1350. This region then lay beyond the City walls, and when all the churchyards were choked, this spot was bought and pits were dug in it, for the dead to be thrown in without ceremony or delay. Then there was a change, for home from the French wars came that mirror of chivalry, Sir Walter Manny, with his royal master, the Third Edward, and possibly finding his conscience stirred by thoughts of the foes he had slain in battle, the knight spent some of his wealth in endowing a chapel in the middle of this very square of grass, and a band of Carthusian friars came to say Masses for the dead who were sown so thickly in the soil below and around. Perhaps it is their rich dust that produces so thick a crop of leaves. At any rate, for a century or two the chantry, or monastery rather, did its work, and the dark cloisters echoed with the sound of "office" and orisons, the tolling of bells by

day and night, and the voices of the brethren at prayer. Then in their turn came the Eighth Henry and Thomas Cromwell, and the cloisters rang with a conflict which has been variously described. Most of those scenes of "suppression" are made horrid by accounts of butchery and incendiarism on the one side, and terror and execration on the other; but we have it on the testimony of Sir Thomas More that these monks of the Charterhouse died in the spirit of their Master. The ex-Chancellor was himself awaiting execution in the Tower, and as he watched them from his prison cell led forth to their gory deliverance, he said to his heroic daughter, Margaret Roper: "Lo, dost thou not see, Megg, that these blessed fathers be now as cheerfully going to their death as bridegrooms to their marriage!" And so the era of the monks passed, and the era of the nobles supervened. What had been a chantry for the dead became an aristocratic mansion to be bestowed by royalty or bartered among courtiers.

I had a call to make at the Master's Lodge, and found across a little gravelled walk, the door, it is true, but no sign of knocker or bell to make my coming known. On nearer examination I found the door was open, and pushing it back found myself in a dark vestibule painted a deep yellow, pleasantly relieved by clumps of flowers placed on the high window sills. A bust of some worthy or other stood on a pedestal in the corner, and a quaint old fireplace with a picture or two helped to break the monotony. I advanced to a second door and pressed a bell. A butler led me to a hall whose furniture and pictures derived their air of value and importance chiefly from the all-pervading darkness, but from this I emerged into a large library, only to find the light still evading me. The only window was set high in the wall, and embayed into the bargain. However, a fire blazed gaily in a quaint old grate, shedding a heartening glow over the pictures and books which filled the shelves extending the full length of one

of the walls. A cane chair of uncommon size and shape drawn up to the fire, with a footrest, engendered the suspicion that my host was an invalid and so it proved. The venerable man excused the darkness of the place with the reminder that the builders of five hundred years ago thought more of defence from enemies and the elements than they did of light, and I thought to myself that the eyes of many generations since are paying the penalty. Such old chambers as these must have fireglow or sunshine to make them bearable, or brooding melancholy possesses them; at least, I could never care to sit in the company of these painted ladies and gentlemen of the Jacobean and Carolean times who gaze down upon the scene with lambent and moody eyes. The unfortunate Monmouth, for instance, hangs just by the Master's chair, and to look upon his handsome face is to realise his fateful history. Legend says that these full-length paintings were the property of the Norfolks, but that they never claimed them.

The mild and beneficent face of Sir Thomas Sutton, Master of Ordnance in his day, beamed down from over the mantelpiece, set like a medallion in a richly decorated stone framework. It seemed strange to see at the Master's hand an electric lamp, so odd a consort to its antique surroundings; but the general impression I gained of the room was one of state and sombre splendour, and I was almost startled at finding such a room within a stone's throw of modern London, the echo of whose mighty roar was still in my ears. But one caught no sign of its throb, and here, only a few hundred yards away, I was suddenly at home in a great mansion of the Restoration days.

The Master himself was a worthy figure dressed in black, with hair almost white, a man with a pleasant courtliness in manner and speech, as of one accustomed to deal with persons and affairs of importance. He lay back in his more than easy chair, fingering a neat gold chain or toying with a paper-knife,

as he quietly answered my questions about the Poor Brothers. I was interested to hear him speak of their food, which he said he had improved, as also of his methods in dealing with them. He said he always addressed them as "gentlemen," although there were some who had probably never been used to the term. Others were well educated; one was the son of a former canon of Westminster, born on the edge of the cloisters, and now come to end his days in the Charterhouse. I asked whether they felt their dependence, and inquired if they did not brood over the fact that this was the end of their active life. "No," said the Master, and a smile came into features enfeebled with pain and illness, "the evening comes at last to us all." Then he folded his hands, and I was silent a moment, for he was evidently thinking of himself, aged as he manifestly was, and very feeble. Yet he declared that he knew all that went on: at least he imagined that he did,—making the correction as a second thought, and half

smiling at the idea of vigilance in a broken veteran like himself.

I was still talking when the folding doors opened, and the butler announced a visitor, a tall gentleman with whitened hair. "Ah, Fletcher, my boy," said our host cordially, "is it you?"

"Shall I go, sir, or come again?"

"No, no; sit down by the fire."

The visitor sat as I rose, half amused. I felt instinctively that this must be a pupil who had come to visit his old headmaster. For the Master of Charterhouse had also been Head of the school, and probably still regarded this youth of sixty as a boy. So he received him with much the same sort of feeling as though he were the School Captain come to report an outbreak among the lower boys. So strong are the bonds in our great public schools that they are not broken even by the stress of years. I could easily fancy that Fletcher had come to put before his old Head Master some grave problem that had arisen in his own affairs.

THE POOR BROTHERS

You will see from this that the inside life of the Charterhouse is as real as its exterior is picturesque, but it is hard to gather what the essence of the place is unless you get a glimpse into the domestic arrangements of the Poor Brothers. Past the arch leading to the Master's Lodge and the gloomy old office of the Manciple, in the dark old court with the wood and plaster walls, you catch a glimpse of Wash-house Court and the Monks' Kitchen. I sought the second of the college quadrangles, surrounded by the Brothers' dwellings, the tops of their walls battlemented, and their fronts covered with creeper, now tattered and all but leafless after the November gales. The soft cooing of a flock of pigeons pecking amongst the gravel fell soothingly upon the ears. A cold drizzling rain served to emphasise one's desire for shelter, and a quiet air of melancholy hanging over the old place in no way quarrelled with the sense

of hospitality. In some moods antiquity wields a strange fascination upon us who are free to come and go of our own free will, but the Poor Brothers whose life is chiefly bounded by these grey walls, may have come to regard their monastic surroundings with something akin to dislike, being in a way antiques themselves and therefore dull to the outward attractions of age in any form.

Musing thus in front of number 9,—the figure is indicated in well-polished brass,—and seeing no name upon the door, I turned the handle and entered, to find myself at the bottom of a staircase with oak panels and balusters, scrupulously polished. The names I sought were inscribed in turn on the two oaken doors on each of the landings, and the Captain's greeted me at last. I sounded a quiet rap with the bright brass knocker, and the now familiar stentorian voice bade me enter. In a moment I was shaking hands with the Poor Brother, a short and substantial gentleman with rather fiery brown eyes set in a solid head

which was covered with a few silvery hairs neatly brushed down on either side of a wrinkled forehead. Beard, whiskers, and moustache were carefully trimmed like a well-ordered old garden, and this neatness and attention to detail I had long found to be typical of the man. He evidently spurned the notion of ease, for he was carefully attired in a black tail-coat and waistcoat, and trousers to match; his linen was of snowy whiteness, and his boots in their pride of blacking were equally immaculate. His welcome was just as irreproachable. I soon found if he had a pardonable weakness it was to have it said that he did not look his age. When challenged, I hazarded something between sixty-five and seventy, and meant it. He was fourscore and over, and still hale and hearty, as he boasted justifiably enough, in the act of drawing himself up to his full height and thrusting out his chest like a soldier. The secret was that he lived by rule and method, he confided to me, coupled with enthusiasm and determination to follow

the diligent example of the good Founder. Ideals at eighty, thought I. Here is a man with a will, a type of the genuine John Bull, who never knows when he is beaten, and defies Time to put him out of joint.

"Now, you see this little table," quoth the Captain, tapping his forefinger on its top, which was covered with a bright red cloth having a flower-pattern running over it. "And you see that chair yonder," indicating a high-backed one with spindles for a back and polished arms and legs. "Those and a bed are the articles of furniture allowed by the Charterhouse to each Brother when he comes in."

I know now he was unjust to the notions of comfort entertained by the Governors.

"The rest we find ourselves; and whether our friends give them to us, or we pay for them out of our pension of thirty-six pounds a year, doesn't matter. But, you see, I have all that a man can want." He showed me with enviable pride all his pictures, with a large photograph of a country scene occupying the

place of honour, other landscapes to support it, and around and about, highly coloured heads representing various types of beauty. They were humble enough, but had they been the finest canvases of Titian or Velasquez, I doubted if they would have pleased the honest Captain half so well. They reminded him pleasantly, he told me, of scenes and persons that had found favour in his eyes long years ago, and were thus possessed of many delightful associations. On a bureau of carved black oak which spoke all too loudly of a cheap modern era, stood a phonograph, which he explained, was for the evenings, and rules are rules, whether you derive them from a strict foundation or you frame them for yourself. "If I could hear it play when I liked," he said profoundly, "I shouldn't enjoy it in the evenings, should I? So I keep from it and look forward to it. At eight o'clock exactly I put it on my table and enjoy it all the more." There was nothing for it but to fall in with his humour, though I wondered if his brothers and neighbours gloated

over the coming of eight o'clock to a like degree.

In everything we examined about the room, he showed the enthusiasm and expansion of a connoisseur, drawing my truant attention again and again to the accurate hanging of his pictures and the placing of his ornaments, until we had made the tour of the spacious old chamber. He showed with similar pride the arrangement of the contents in the oak bureau, and gravely added : "When the Master's wife brings distinguished visitors to see my rooms, she always shows them these drawers, with my collars neatly done up in this corner, my shirts there, my neckties there, my handkerchiefs here, and so on." With such courtesy did he do the honours of his apartment, that one might almost conceive he was the reincarnation of some old worthy connected with the place, and that the aristocratic spirit of the Duke of Norfolk, whom Elizabeth and her ministers beheaded, still hovered over it if it had not actually invaded the personality of the Captain.

He showed me how exact he was in his accounts —alas, too late in life, or how came he to be a Poor Brother ?—and he drew from the bureau a large diary containing his every record of the past thirteen years, down to the last purchase of his groceries and firewood. He pointed to an ingenious Japanese lamp constructed of coloured glass, in which on the festive occasions when he received company, he burnt night-lights. His reading lamp, too, was so highly polished that it reflected the Captain's face upon every curve, and was discussed with an odd mixture of criticism and affection. It burnt as clearly as the lantern of a lighthouse should, but gave forth unpleasant odours which no endeavour of his could stifle. The fact that he hardly noticed it proved the healthy disposition of the man, and the story of his day put the explanation in a nutshell.

He rose at six o'clock in the Summer and at seven in the Winter, and daily from that moment forward he parcelled out his time as if it were precious money. The servant allotted

to number nine lit his fire, so that by the time his toilet was finished, his hearth was bright and busy. He prepared his own breakfast, and proceeded to devour his morning paper. "I like to know what is going on," he said, "and the paper nowadays gives you a deal for your penny. Of course, books are all very well in the evenings, but by day I like to feel the pulse of things. I am interested in everything that occurs, whether it is a crisis in foreign politics, an expedition to the Pole, or a case in the police courts. But to tell you the truth, what interests me most is to follow the progress of a hard-fought campaign," and the valiant Poor Brother stood up and marched about the room with his chest out and his head erect.

"You have been in the army, Captain," I ventured.

"Well, I gave the ten best years of my life to the Auxiliary Forces, and won my commission by hard work and devotion to the Queen. It was in the days when there was talk of invasion," and said the Captain in his

graphic way: "one stamp on the ground brought up two hundred thousand of as fine fellows as ever burnt powder," and he snorted as though he was inhaling fire and brimstone at that very moment.

This honest display of martial spirit filled me with respect, and enabled me to realise the real combativeness of a typical survivor of the Crimean days. What slumbering pride burnt within his bosom, for all his slow and deliberate movements! My host related with pride stories illustrating his prowess in the field, and made as much of a hot march between London and Windsor barracks as if the enemy had actually landed and entrenched themselves to oppose his company's progress at a point somewhere about Putney. He was no braggart, but merely inspired with love of country,—an excess of which possibly had caused the ruin of his fortunes and brought him to the Charterhouse.

His description of the daily life of the place amused me and yet was full of a haunting

pathos, for it is affecting to hear of old gentlemen who at the last have to make a new home amongst strangers and new surroundings, and are compelled to submit to a certain discipline which, however mild and prudent, may prove a burden to them, for age is apt to be querulous and conservative. Once or twice I sighed to hear my Captain speak of coming "home," from his walks and visits, by which he meant to this comfortable room of his, but I thought, only his pictures and what he so fondly called his bric-à-brac are there to greet him. They are old and familiar friends; but to leave the crowded streets, and the busy world of strife and activity, of jealousies and affections, and to come back to an empty room must be a sore trial to the strongest will. It is all the easier, therefore, to admire the Captain's strong will, and his determination to live by rule, and the strict division of time.

"After I have tidied up my room," he said, "I go out at eleven o'clock, and walk down one side of Holborn until I reach a certain old

tavern where the newspapers are kept. I have read my news at breakfast, but I now want opinions, and get them in the *Times.* With a tablespoonful of whisky, the finest to be got in London, I sit down in the parlour and read the leading articles. They are splendidly written, sir. At twelve, precisely, I have done, and walk home on the other side of Holborn. Sometimes I have little purchases to make, such as provisions and so forth, and I may be delayed for a little, but if not I write my letters, enter up my diary, balance my accounts until dinner time, at two, when I put on my gown and go into Hall, where I sit at the head of a table, and enjoy a little conversation. I am the Jester, and try to keep up the spirits of my neighbours."

The Captain told me that he used to say grace, being allowed three pounds a year for this service, but some of the Brothers behaved so badly and laughed so much, that he begged the Master to relieve him of the duty. "Some of them," he explained, "have no sense of

dignity or self-respect, and titter like schoolboys. Even the grand old Hall does not affect them, nor any pretty old English custom," by which he alluded to the ceremony of the grace, printed as it is, on the back of a wooden armorial shield, emblazoned with Sir Thomas Sutton's arms, and spoken from a dais.

"They should give you music from the minstrels' gallery, Captain," I remarked.

He shook his head, whilst admitting that they kept up some other good old customs. For instance, on Founder's Day, as we have seen, there was a fine service in the ancient Chapel, and each brother was given a whole capon, with sweets and dessert, and a bottle of port or sherry, which he could invite a friend to share with him.

"Of an afternoon," he went on alertly, "I take forty winks, until Evening Chapel, for we must attend one service a day, either in the morning or the evening. But I love the old Chapel, though it does seem odd to tick

us old fellows off as if we were boys again," and he sighed, as though he wished he were. After tea the Captain often sallied forth to call upon a friend, or to attend some modern concert given in St. Giles', Cripplegate, or rather in a social room connected with that famous old church. As a great treat he sometimes attended the play, for a Brother may go out when he chooses, and need not return till ten or eleven, another hour being allowed if he enter his name in the book.

The humble politics of the Charterhouse also furnished not a little recreation and even excitement, for a trifle within those conventual walls could cause as great an agitation as the fall of a Government in the world without. For example, the Captain waxed wroth concerning the question of the black cloth gowns which each Brother wore. They were quaint garments of strong broadcloth, and for two centuries had been made by generations of one family. A new Manciple, however, had given their custom elsewhere with results that

were not to the Captain's liking. His own cloak hung on a peg of the bedroom door ; he brought it to me, and asked me to test its quality. It seemed to me stout and excellent. He smiled. "Yes, we have gone back to our old tailors, but we had a hard fight with the Manciple. I'll tell you what I did. I went to a third party who was a tailor, I showed him one of the new gowns. He condemned it ; his foreman bore him out, and we produced them as witnesses before the Master, who held an inquiry into the subject. But before that, I must tell you, a memorial was prepared by some of the Brothers. They brought it to me to sign, but I declined ; it was so offensively worded. So it was smoothed down, and then presented. Well, at the reception the Master heard both sides, and the Manciple wanted to take the new gown to show to his tailor. "No," I said, "that is our only evidence. Now, I have witnesses here who will prove that it is not nearly so good as the old ones, and besides it is a

quarter of a yard shorter." So we got our way, and going to the cupboard he put a big pinch of snuff on the back of his hand and took it into his system.

"Ah!" he cried, "I feel more brisk. Capital stimulant, sir. So you want to know the life of a Poor Brother," and he laughed. "Bless you, we are much the same as any other community; we have our friends and our foes, our little tiffs, our exclusions, and some are good and others are bad, and others are middling. What did you expect? Some of us mope, and some of us make the best of it, though we all know this is our last home. I am speaking in confidence," and his voice dropped slightly, "but we do get a rascal amongst us now and then. I remember a major of marines here. He had powerful friends, and they got him into the Charterhouse, and he soon showed that he had no scruples. I mean he would borrow money, and drink, and bring his old reckless ways into the cloisters. He had been here about

five or six years when he died,—a man of seventy, I should say. After he was buried a letter came for him which on being opened was found to contain a cheque for twenty-five pounds, though it is one of the conditions that a Brother has no worldly goods. An inquiry followed, and it was discovered that he had been in receipt of an income which his old friends had made up for him; and with this he had kept up an establishment in the suburbs which he visited daily during his residence here, and where he had spent his holidays."

I could not help laughing at this story, which showed how much fraud might be hidden beneath a black cloak and a white head of hair; but the Captain regarded me with a grave look of disapproval.

"Now, would you believe it, sir?" he went on. "Though a Brother must be a widower or a bachelor, we have had women come here who claimed some of them!"

I was careful to fall into his humour, and

protested vehemently against such a gross breach of morality. And he went on to show me how with a little management and re-organisation, the number of the Brothers might be brought to its old complement of eighty, instead of fifty-five as at present.

"Ah! well, I don't suppose the Charter-house will be here in a few years' time; the land is too precious, Captain."

"It will last my time," he said, thoughtfully, and taking up a soft handbrush flicked away some cinder dust which a gust of wind had carried into the room. He was grumbling at it, and I pointed out the wisdom of having only oilcloth instead of a carpet, which harbours the dust. The subject set the Captain riding off on his pet hobby-horse, and he told me what precautions he took against the weekly visit of the woman who cleaned his room. The "bric-à-brac" was put away, the tablecloth was folded and hidden from possible pollution, the ornaments on the mantelpiece were carefully covered, the

numerous chairs were piled together in little islands, and other devices were adopted by which the invading foe was met.

"But it is only once a week," said the Captain, "and I do the dusting. I go over mirror, walls, window, and pictures with a feather brush, until not a speck is left; and my eyesight is still good, thank God,—no spectacles."

But it was his annual holiday upon which the old gentleman dilated with the keenest pleasure. In a few minutes he lived it over again, and laughed and chuckled as he described the boarding-house by the sea in which he had spent a happy month.

"I am a sociable man," he began, as he toyed with the jet watch-chain which meandered over his ample waistcoat. "You know how they stare at one another in the boarding-houses. Now, said I, to myself, when I came down to breakfast the first morning of my visit, something must be done to promote harmony, for they were all looking one another up and down,

and nobody spoke a word. I couldn't put up with this silence, and addressing our good hostess, I said :—'Excuse me, madam, for the liberty I am taking, but here we are on a holiday, placed round a table spread with good things, and yet sit looking at one another, and wondering what each of us is, and who we are. Now, if you'll allow me, I propose to re-christen every one!'

"They all began to smile, believe me. But I went on: 'And if she will permit me, I will begin with the good lady who presides at the head of the table. Now, madam, what do you say to Lily-of-the-Valley?' I waited and looked at her. 'Oh,' said she, blushing, 'I think that is too pretty a name for me.' That were impossible, m'm', I said with a bow, and I appealed to the company, which assented in a chorus. So taking courage, I went the round of the table, and hard work it was to remember the names of the flowers, for I had to be careful of my 'P's' and 'Q's' in a mixed assembly. I couldn't call a middle-aged lady a Daisy or a

Buttercup, you know, but I had achieved my object, I had come out like the sun, and thawed the ice. That, sir, is what I always like to do when I go away: be cheerful, and forget that I am a Poor Brother. I make myself agreeable to all, and enjoy the fun more than many a younger man. Do you know, the good woman of the boarding-house got me to give away a young lady who was married from her establishment, and a grand champagne breakfast we had afterwards."

I now rose to go, as the Captain showed evident signs that he was anxious to go for his morning walk.

"Remember," he said, "don't smoke too much; don't drink too much; don't read too much; don't eat too much. Keep strict accounts in money matters; rise early, and you will be as young at eighty as I am. It is true I have a lot of friends outside the Charterhouse, and am more fortunate than some of the Poor Brothers, who have no one left in the world, neither kith, kin, nor friends, poor fellows.

But still we are free of earthly cares, praised be the Lord and Thomas Sutton."

I stood on the step and shook hands with him, and even there I found an example of the Captain's precise and methodical habit. Hanging from a brass hook on the door was a neat brass frame in which was a card covered with glass. "Captain So-and-So. Back at . . ."

"So," he said, "callers always know my movements."

THE SOANE MUSEUM

I HAVE often passed the dingy old house on the north side of Lincoln's Inn Fields known as the Soane Museum, but until the other day I had not the curiosity to enter its doors, it has so sombre and forbidding an aspect. Moreover, by some strange dispensation of providence, whilst it is open in summer, the sun is shining on the green square, when the spreading branches afford pleasant shade, the birds are in full song, the peacocks are strutting proudly over the smooth lawns, and the flowers are displaying their brightest blooms, defying even the smoke and dust of London, and at such a time no man in his right mind would remain indoors. The Museum is shut in winter when one would gladly seek shelter from the cold blasts and study its contents.

However, I made bold to knock at the high front door on this grey and searching Saturday afternoon; after waiting a minute or two we were admitted by a woman in cap and apron, who bidding us step inside, said she would take my card to the proper quarter. Meanwhile we waited on the mat and peered curiously into the high and narrow lobby, for it could be called by no other name. When the eyes had accustomed themselves to the gloom various objects came out one by one; plaques upon the wall, busts, various small pieces of furniture, open doors offering suggestive views beyond, but too dim to reveal any definite form. It is a melancholy house now, silent, cold, haunted by ghosts, but old Soane, who was a famous architect in his time, rich, popular, and a man of many friends, was no doubt very proud of his collection, and often entertained his friends and neighbours with great hospitality. I say this because I learnt that the wine cellars are of more than usual extent.

So I amused myself by picturing the distinguished people who had stood in this narrow passage. They lived at the end of the eighteenth century and during the first thirty years of the nineteenth; wigs and swords, powder and patches had just disappeared, but their costumes were still of the stately order, and would make us all stare considerably if we saw them in the street to-day. Many of Sir John's friends, too, were distinguished enough to wear orders, and no doubt his sitting-room presented a very brilliant air on the occasion of his big dinner parties; they would be bankers, noble connoisseurs, lords and commons who had given commissions for new houses or additions to their gardens and parks, rich citizens, men of learning and science, artists and so forth, who with their ladies would make a very pretty company, I am sure. You must have been somebody or I doubt whether you would have received an invitation to dine with Sir John, and hear him tell stories of his famous collection, and follow his delicate hands

(of which they say he was very proud, on the evidence of his portrait where they are placed well forward in the foreground), as they displayed now a precious classical antique brought from Rome or Athens, a finely cut gem, a first edition, a picture, a drawing by one of the great brothers Adam, a choice piece of *famille verte* china, one of Vulliamy's clocks, a bust of Napoleon, or any other of the almost countless treasures in this remarkable collection. At least I shall choose to imagine such a picture, now that I have made my tour through these great melancholy chambers. For over seventy years the great house has known no ordinary life; no dinners have been eaten in the dining-room; no ladies have taken their dish of tea and whispered scandal in the drawing-room upstairs; no children's feet have pattered up and down the winding stone steps. The house has known none of the ordinary commerce of human life; the postman passes it by, he has not even a dead letter to drop into the box,—I forget even whether it has one. I suppose

there is no other house in London with such a history, for we see it almost just as it was on the day when the remains of Sir John were carried through this grim lobby in his coffin, full of years and honours, to his classic tomb which he had designed years before, in St. Giles's—where his wife and son awaited him, the subject, no doubt, of lengthy obituary notices and wholesale eulogies in the papers of the time. His portraits depict him as a genial man, not without humour, hale, rubicund and hearty; his face and figure were pleasant to look upon; and more fortunate than many rich folks, he enjoyed the company of his treasures until he was eighty-six or so. You read success in his visage but nothing of his humble origins,—how he began as an errand-boy, went to Rome to study, and came back imbued with those solemn ideals he proceeded to put into solid shape; how he became Clerk of Works at St. James's Palace and the House of Commons and other important institutions; how he went on designing palaces and churches

and mansions; and had his portrait painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence and others, and lived and died with every attribute of greatness. He was steeped in the classical traditions, and revelled in domes and columns and porticoes, as you may see by the numerous designs which hang on the walls of the house. But he built the Bank of England, and if you have occasion to penetrate that famous stronghold, or to perambulate its courts you may judge of the style for yourself. It is heavy, substantial, tomb-like, sombre, decorous, and suggestive of eternity, which, I take it, is a most fitting style for that eminent treasure-house. Could John Bull ask for more?

But it is very impolite to keep you waiting so long. I was presently led by a small and shrunken guide, who is as constant in his attendance on the visitor as black care on the horseman. "We have a party coming at three o'clock," he said, "so there is not very much time. Will you please give me your umbrella, and write your name in the visitors' book?"—

leading us into the vast double room, the front portion of which is the dining-room, and the back the library. I accordingly wrote my name; this was my Open Sesame to a collection which has not its like in London, if in this country.

Sir John was not a collector of curios in the sense that Horace Walpole was, but had always the idea before him of forming a museum which would be useful to students. For this reason the walls of the front room were lined with sedate mahogany bookcases behind whose glass doors reposed many volumes treating of his profession, with sets of the works of the classical authors of all nations. I wondered whether they were ever opened; they certainly seemed to have remained untouched for years, and had the appearance of slumbering quietly and contentedly, undisturbed by the impatient hands of the inquirer. A thick catalogue of the books lay on the handsome round table which occupied the middle of the room, so I dare say they are consulted now and then. But

here were two bronze busts that might have found a place at Strawberry Hill, of which I was particularly reminded by a sight of Sir Robert Walpole's writing table standing in the window of the back room, for we wandered from one to the other as our fancy moved us. There were also heads of Napoleon in his brilliant youth, and, strange companion!—one of the notorious William Dodd, who was hanged for perjury. His portrait was set over the kind of famous Chippendale arm-chair you see in all the books of furniture and bric-à-brac which are so popular just now; it is richly carved and of a very attractive form, though upon examination it shows more signs of patching and mending than you would think for. No doubts are thrown by the experts on its authenticity, but strange to say, no trace of its pedigree has been found amongst Sir John's papers, though some say it is sure to be discovered some day, in the form of a little bill, a receipt or a memorandum, perhaps lying snugly between the faded leaves of one of the

thousands of books tucked away in every corner. There are Italian vases on the tables and perched up on the top of the bookcases, cinerary urns, busts, a wonderful astronomical clock, a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds (one of the four called "Snake in the Grass"), and many other interesting things which I forget. I confess I was thinking rather of the melancholy of the rooms, the dank trees and the mist of Lincoln's Inn Fields, the high walls looking down through the back windows, and was not impressed that Sir John had coloured his walls a deep Pompeian red, and had Phaethon, the sun-god and his chariot, painted in gaudy colours on the ceiling. But there sounded a tinkle of the bell and presently four gawky youths entered the rooms, accompanied by the curator, who kindly said that we might follow them in the tour of the house which was now begun with due formality. It appeared that he had expected a party of over twenty-five, the Mary Magdalene Club of some suburban parish or other; but the frost and the fog had

chilled their antiquarian zeal, and this bold remnant was all that had kept their appointment. They were clerks, I assumed, and may have drunk deep of the spirit of the collection, but they scarcely spoke during our roamings, except to give a little laugh, or to mutter a Bœotian guffaw or two at some official and, no doubt, very time-worn jest. These hung upon the presumed vanity of Sir John, deduced from the fact that in his various portraits he usually put his small and delicate hands well forward; the size of his wine cellars, the scapegrace son whom he disinherited; the amusing caricature of Hogarth, and one or two other matters. You were struck again and again by the many ingenuities with which the old architect saved room, and gave artificial spaciousness to his house by a deft arrangement of mirrors in tiny slits, round, square, concave, or convex. Then he was very artful in contriving lockers and cupboards in all sorts of idle corners, under the windows, in narrow passages, behind doors and so forth. A cheerful fire was burning

in a quaint old fireplace in the breakfast room, which was lighted by a sort of lantern in a domed ceiling, and by windows whose lowest portions were on a level with the ceiling itself. This was a really cosy chamber, and though fitted with dark wood and sombre furniture, was relieved and broken up by pictures, mirrors, clocks, and bronzes. But it was in various galleries that the real collection was distributed ; the walls of the passage leading to them were lined with ancient fragments of Rome and Greece, capitals and pediments, heads with broken noses, gods and goddesses, much chipped and defaced, bits of tombs, of temples, of fountain and baths, which prepared the mind for the series of small chambers into which we were now led. It was a bold and gloomy experience, for the electric light did but enhance the melancholy appearance of these heathen masterpieces of classic sculptors, whose works have been carried away from their sunny homes in the South, and brought hither, after many a strange adventure, to lie in this haunted

house in Lincoln's Inn Fields. I saw full-sized figures of Homer and Virgil, heads of Hercules, Ulysses, Jupiter, Diana, and many another, and countless limbs and torsos, all ranged methodically in their proper places. We went upstairs and downstairs, turned to the right and the left, and still we encountered more antiques, many in the original marble, many in the cast, but they must be of great value nowadays when Italy forbids their exportation. Chill though I was, and oppressed by the thoughts of all these time-stained relics of a past age, I could not but admire the beauties of the row of marble urns in which there had once been deposited the ashes and bones of the great, for no poor man could have afforded such a resting-place. They were no bigger than the blotting-pad on which I now am writing, but I thought they made Death less terrible, for to repose in one of these graceful models of Greek temples could only be a joy. *Apropos* of tombs, the lowest chamber contained the mighty alabaster coffin

of Seti, one of the old Egyptian kings. It was covered over with mystic hieroglyphics, and was enclosed in a glass case to fend it from the London smoke. I was glad to get upstairs again, for it was oppressive down there amongst all the embers of decay and signs of the vicissitudes which overtake man, for how could the potent Pharaoh ever have dreamt that one day his magnificent coffin would be carried away far from the blue sky and the blinding sands of his own land to this island of fogs to be the cynosure of members of the Club of St. Mary Magdalene? Seti's portrait hung on the wall close by, showing the face of a man of intellect and will; his remains are in a museum, too—that of Cairo. I believe mummy and coffin once lay in the famous cave cemeteries of Thebes; the body was removed in some panic to the innermost depths of the earth; the robbers stole the rich utensils which had lain in the coffin for the use of the dead monarch till such time as he was summoned to heaven. This is the story which we smiled

at, knowing that roaring London with all its business awaited us without, but it is probable that we should have bowed very low to Seti had we been Egyptians and been his subjects.

There is a picture-room which is a curiosity of itself, for it is only some eighteen feet square, but contains as many pictures as a gallery six times its size would hold. We admired the pictures on the walls, and then, lo! a latch was lifted and the walls swung back, and we found another set of pictures. Amongst these were Hogarth's "Rake's Progress," and "The Election," the original paintings from which the famous engravings were made. They were once in David Garrick's collection, and it is pleasant to think that he, too, had gazed upon them, and perhaps mimicked some of the prominent characters in them with all his powers, for the entertainment of his guests. They say he could imitate every sound from a cock-crow to a crying baby, and certainly these canvases, so vivid, so humorous, so real, would give him enough scope for his

phenomenal powers. Tragedy, comedy, pathos—here you had them all. In this extending room, too, were many of Sir John Soane's works, temples, baths, triumphal gates, palaces, bridges, all conceived on the most magnificent scale. They were done in water-colour, and were still fresh. Some were early studies, done when he was an Academy student working in Italy: others represented fond dreams intended to tempt rich patrons; some were actually translated into stone and brick. If you pass the Bank of England, and wander through its many courts, you will see the one work by which the old architect is remembered; but creator though he was, and a fond father to his works, no doubt, yet he shows us a picture of the same Bank of England as he conceived it would appear two thousand years hence. It is in ruins, its top half shaved clean off, and all its rooms and vaults are exposed to view; a quaint fancy which testifies to a strain of humour in him which one would not suspect after a glance at those solid and solemn classic

temples to which he was so devoted. There were other rooms upstairs, also filled with curiosities, precious books, gems, manuscripts, china and so forth ; but the night has fallen, and the clocks are striking five, and it is time to go. So we thank our guide who has taken so much trouble with us, as much as if we had been a party of a hundred, and the shrunken attendant escorts us to the front door. "Surely," I said to him, as he handed me my umbrella, "you must feel a little melancholy here in this great house." "No, I don't," he replied, "I have grown so used to the antiques that I am glad to get back to them after I've been out for a while." One dull light was burning in the hall, the dull reflection of the fire in Sir John's breakfast-room was making great flickering shadows, and the wind moaned in those woeful sepulchral chambers. Outside I greeted even the raw mists with pleasure, and saluted the new moon sailing through the clouds which swept over the shivering trees in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

BEHIND THE SCENES AT DRURY LANE

The pantomime in preparation was "Aladdin," though it hardly matters. In my experience, all pantomimes are alike until the eventful night,—a great crescendo of anxiety and flutter and expense. You shall hear of my adventures at a typical rehearsal or two. The first visit was timed at three of a December afternoon, with a biting frost, and the sun a globe of wintry and misty red, staring us full in the face as we turned into Drury Lane. It gave no warmth and very little light, but just seemed like a round lamp in the murky sky. We passed through the stage door, with a small crowd of shabby men and women, who were closely scrutinised by the burly janitor, tall, stout, impressive, who passed a large part

of his life in the wooden room, half glass, with his eyes on all comers; for the theatre is like a large factory, and this is the watch-house where all movements are checked. "You can't go out, ladies," the watchman is saying to three or four laughing girls, in large showy hats.

"We have permission to go out for a cup of tea," said one of them.

"Oh, then, go on." Then we joined several others who wished to pass into the theatre and explained their various businesses, passing over a ledge of counter notes, cards, and bits of paper to this outpost of authority, who dispatched them by sharp boys or said that the lady or gentleman desired was out. It was all very rough and ready though so much vigilance was called for. A brisk fire was burning in the little stove in the corner, and a kettle was hissing above it; a wide basket chair stood by it; many things hung over the mantelshelf, each labelled and numbered; rows of overcoats and mantles hung on pegs; letters and

telegrams awaited their owners in a rack, or were laid out on the counter. On the walls of the passage without were fixed various notice boards, with "Calls" printed on them in big letters; and other legends such as "Treasury," showing that this was indeed a factory. A pleasure factory, if you like,—though it was hard to believe, for a more workaday place I was never in; a more anxious, hard-working, bustling place, or less attractive on the score of mere externals. The watchman sent our cards by a lynx-eyed boy, who disappeared through a door leading into the inner regions, and this door, by the way, was never still for a moment. It formed, in fact, a sort of bellows for making more wind, as if enough nipping air did not enter by the stage-door itself, eager as the rest of us to pass into the awful precincts.

We followed it, passed down a dark and narrow corridor with a stone floor which struck a mortal chill to the body; passed some doors, and pushing one back, mounted a couple of

steps and were on the stage, or rather as much of it as was not occupied by the ends of the scenes. Then after creeping along the narrow space between each other and the walls of the theatre, and reaching the front, we found ourselves in a fairy dell embracing the whole of that vast stage, a glittering tropic scene, somewhere in China, I presume,—with rocks, water, sky, trees, sun, and banks of flowers, that almost allowed one to forget the nipping frost, and the smoking mists in Drury Lane outside.

"*One—two—three! one—two—three! clap—clap! one—two—three—four—five! tinker—tinker—tum-ti—tum-ti—tum—tum—tum.*" A baldish gentleman with an iron-grey moustache, and a sparse fringe of hair at the base of his skull,—clad in a frock coat, dark trousers, and shiny boots, which he used pretty often to mark time,—stood in the middle of a large number—say a hundred and fifty or so, and you will be near the mark—of young ladies who were twisting, turning, waltzing, hopping, kicking, swinging, all in time with the music;

now circling round the stage, now breaking up into groups, now advancing in line, now sinking to their knees, and in fact, performing evolutions which only the brain of a ballet-master could conceive and combine into a single scheme.

This was the ballet, or a portion of it,—fairies, immortals, I assume, when the time comes, but now attired in everyday garb as worn by the young ladies we meet in omnibuses, third-class carriages, tubes, and other public conveyances in this year of Our Lord. This at least applies to the raiment of the majority; the rest were in short dancing skirts of various hues, white and blue and red, reaching to their knees, and therefore displaying a large amount of stocking, but hardly so shapely of contour nor so nymph-like and attractive to the eye as they would be when clothed in hose of silk or even cotton that clings tight to the skin, and is, they say, moulded to human limbs with curious artifice. But, as is always the case, appearances were illusory. I thought the

ballet-master must surely be the happiest man in London at this moment, and a man of most enviable lot, to be surrounded by so great a bevy of ladies, all obliging his every mood, the stamping of his foot, the motions of his hands, all directing their eyes upon him, as if he alone ruled their destinies. So we crept slowly along the edge of one of the lines of ladies, fearing to be caught in some sudden manœuvre, and did not breathe freely until we reached one of the columns of the proscenium, where we paused, and once more surveyed the curious spectacle. I could not see the musicians, but the piano was on the opposite side of the stage, or rather it was half hidden within a much battered black wooden case. The performer was strumming march music, and my ear soon told me that the instrument must be as battered as the case in which it reposed,—being kept there, I assume, for the greater convenience of moving it to and fro. Some of the notes, at any rate, were dumb, or emitted a wooden sound, and I thought that some years must

have sped by since the tuner had paid it a visit. It was evidently a piano that had seen much service, and was rapidly approaching an old age which I fear would not be highly honoured, though it had made so much pleasant music, set so many feet tripping gay measures, and prepared the way for the grand orchestra whose places now yawned beneath my eyes—dark, empty, forlorn.

We now thought it safer to pass from the stage on to the tiny bridge which crossed by one of the lower boxes, and thence descend by a short flight of steps into the stalls, whence we could watch the operations without fear and trembling. We sat down in the two end ones which were unoccupied ; the rest in front and around us contained more ladies and a host of children whom at first I mistook for privileged visitors, friends of players and the officials come to amuse themselves, or to encourage the rehearsal by their plaudits. But I soon discovered that they, too, had work to do, and were merely awaiting the call to take

their places on the stage. I ascertained this by fragments of conversation, for most of them were talking, and not in whispers, either. I heard them discuss the dresses which were being prepared for them, their parts, their positions in the ballet, and other personal matters which left no doubt in my mind whatever. Never before had I been surrounded by so many of the fair sex,—never. I was informed that they were ladies of the ballet, and supers, whose wages would range between fifteen shillings a week and forty or thereabouts; yet you would judge by their attire that they would spurn such employments and emoluments. The lady next to me wore a green velvet costume, a large hat, mostly feathers, which reached almost to my ear, a rich boa, a number of personal ornaments such as bangles, lockets, bracelets, and charms, one or two of them studded with diamonds. Did I say diamonds? Well, let us give them the benefit of the doubt. I guessed, however, that she must be engaged for some individual part,

for one of the maids in white caps and aprons brought her a cup of tea, a distinction with which none of the others were honoured. Still, as a body, they wore astonishingly fine clothes and exceptionally large hats, hats that would have served for sunshades, and great quantities of furs,—sable, seal, ermine, astrachan, or imitation. In the low light of the theatre, at any rate, they seemed real enough to me, that is all I can say. Jewels were very conspicuous, and if the hands were covered up or hidden in huge muffs as big as footstools, then they glittered in the bands that encircled the hats, and sometimes framed whole portraits. There appeared to be many styles of doing ladies' hair, I thought; some wore combs, some fizzes, some bun-like mounds, some let it hang over their collars; and it was black, yellow, red, golden, or mixed in hue. Even the children, I observed, paid much attention to their hair; I counted dozens of heads in curls, with pretty bows of white ribbon over either ear. The ladies seemed to be hungry. Most of them

were eating chocolate, others sweets, and were either watching the stage, or reading a paper-backed novelette, or gossiping, and I noticed that they invariably called one another "dear," and were very affectionate with one another. There were some pretty faces, of course, but many of them would look more beautiful in their stage array, I felt sure, though many a plain face was hidden under a spreading hat and charmingly framed in a fur boa. Feminine charms are indeed deceptive. I looked at them again and again; here was youth with the world and its pleasures before it; here was middle age, hard, sad, resigned, but grateful; here were young mothers with their little ones, who were to dance in public for the first time, and were in their novitiate; the boisterous, the garrulous, the credulous, the vain, the foolish, the indifferent, the sullen,—they were of all types and temperaments, but all very well-behaved, I must admit, possibly because the managers were on the stage only a few yards away. Most of them had small bags on

their laps, receptacles that seemed to hold all that was requisite for a hasty toilet,—puffs, scents, pomades, pads of hair, ribbons, kerchiefs, and other trifles of that sort. Supplies were brought from time to time from the canteen in the corridor that wound around the stalls,—buns, cakes, sandwiches, tea and coffee and other harmless liquids. As they listened to the music they chattered about the pantomime, the long hours of waiting, the style of the costumes they were to wear, their fit, colour, material, and so on. It was very amusing, though I sat as grave as a judge, watching the dances on the stage and between the pauses turning my attention to my neighbours.

It was pleasant to hear the strumming of the piano, for though there were dumb notes in the keyboard, and the rest might not always have been in tune, yet one could grasp the intention of the composer quite well, and enjoy the tripping airs, the lively steps, the dreamy waltz measure, the melodramatic strain that announced the entrance of the villain, the

pathetic appeals of the persecuted heroine, and so forth. It was all so expressive and well marked that I had no difficulty in following the action. That must be Aladdin, the fortunate youth, that slim lady in a neat blue habit, with the golden curls of a reddish hue flowing over her head, as the lines of ladies fell back in regular order on either side of her, making a lane down which she tripped on light tip-toe, came to the footlights, moving as easily as if she had never used her heels in her life; spinning round and round with arms outspread, and falling into conversation with the ballet-master, who impersonated various important characters of the pantomime, and must now have thrown himself into the skin of that wheedling villain, Almanasar, seeking the wonderful lamp. There was an altercation, though no words were spoken; the ballet-master beat an ignominious retreat. Aladdin was surrounded by the ladies,—a great clatter of many voices arose, the pianist's hands struck crashing chords on his unfortunate instrument,

the groups broke up in apparent confusion. Aladdin tripped up the stage, disappeared behind a cluster of canvas rocks, and was seen again high up on a dizzy pinnacle waving her hands, and evidently about to take flight in what I took to be a silver aeroplane whose wings hovered over her.

But something was wrong.

The ballet-master had followed her, and they were now discussing some fault in the construction of the rocks. I suppose the steps concealed by them were too high, or too low; they settled the matter to their satisfaction; the ballet-master reappeared on the stage again, became himself, directed further evolutions, changed his skin again, and was the centre of a wild mass of whirling, agitated arms, a victim of female excitability. I never saw a man so active, his eyes were everywhere; he saw faults and flaws, he corrected them, speaking with great rapidity, in broken English, French, Italian; racing up to one group, then to another, addressing each, dancing in steps

to show what he wished, throwing himself into extraordinary poses, now on one leg, then on the other, kneeling, bowing, bending, acting,—he was a whole company in himself.

At last he was satisfied, or the stage was required for another scene; all those two hundred ladies began to chatter, their task was done, some tripped one way, some another, disappearing behind scenery to their dressing rooms, or joining their friends in the stalls. Then a host of men in their shirt-sleeves, some wearing aprons, white or green, and caps of paper or cloth, seized the rocks, the banks of grass and flowers, the shining purple sea, the trees hung with jewelled fruits, and for the next half-hour the stage was a scene of activity and what seemed to me to be confusion and chaos, out of which I thought they would never achieve order. The noise was deafening,—the scraping of wood upon the stage, the hammering, the shouting.

We went on the stage once more, and picking our way amongst the busy crowds,

explored the nether regions of the great stage. Many surprises awaited me. The slope, or "rake" is so familiar from the auditorium that you hardly notice it; but it was new to find it studded with the heads of many nails, and composed of various divisions. Crevasses opened before my eyes revealing unimagined depths below. I saw square hatches and traps useful for the sudden appearance and disappearance of demons and gnomes; and altogether the stage, instead of being a simple structure, was an assemblage of innumerable devices and independent details. Instead of a solid foundation, it was a fluid middle world between the inferno of the demons and the firmamental rollers and "flies." But what astonished one most was the flimsy structure of these glowing rocks and sunlit groves, which had looked so real from my seat in the stalls; they were but skeletons of new wood upon which the canvas was stretched, and the magic of the brush did the rest. We encountered dragons of painted wood and paper, thrones, chairs, tables set for

banquets, goblets and drinking bowls, as flimsy and unreal as the rocks and trees, mere things of pasteboard. We peered into lofty chambers where women sat at long tables, stitching spangles and glittering baubles on to velvet and silk and cotton. We pushed back an iron door and found ourselves in a vast studio where the fairyland castles and palaces were being painted, though the most discerning could not have guessed what they were intended to represent, for they seemed to be but rude splashes of many colours, made by the scenic artists in an after-dinner frolic. But by the serious countenances of the artists, gentlemen in long white blouses which reached from their shoulders to their feet, who wore bowler hats and were smoking pipes, and stood before vast canvases with big flat brushes poised in mid-air, I knew it was a serious business. The floor was splashed with colours, the light came in from the roof high above, assistants were busy among the paint-pots, and the place reeked with the scent of oil and grease. A little

model of the stage stood on a bench, and I perceived the need for an exact system, for scale and foot-rule, seeing that hundreds of pieces of scenery must be needed for the production of a great pantomime, all the pieces of which must fit like a suit of clothes, and be ready to rise or fall at the allotted moment unless endless confusion was to reign. Thence we passed one of the carpenters' shops, a large workshop where many men were at work with hammer and saw amid a perfect forest of woodwork. There was no doubt that the theatre was a factory, after all.

Many were the curious things I noticed on our bewildering tour, in the course of which we got lost more than once amidst the stacks of scenery, cordage and pulleys, benches, sham furniture, and woodwork. I forget these in their variety, but I shall never forget the murky London atmosphere which filled the theatre, its chillness, its draughts, its dirt and dust and ugliness. A multitude of shams met the eyes at every turn. We were deluded by the lights,

the paint, the false glitter. Who could believe that these busy workers with the rough hands, the dirty faces, the upturned shirt-sleeves were magicians who transformed wood and canvas into delightful fantasies that appealed so strongly to the imagination?

We were on the stage once more. Gone were the rocks, the sea, and the groves; some down, some up, some propped up in the deep recesses at the side. The whole of the vast area was clear and nothing remained to show the scene of many glorious points of beauty which I had so much admired, and which had wafted me far away from Drury Lane and its seamy surroundings. Some groups of work-men were loitering about, holding conversation with seedy-looking customers in bowler hats; the ballet-master was deep in a lively altercation with two or three friends who were gathered about the piano, stamping his feet and waving his hands, and now and then bursting into tune as he explained some situation in his dances. Who his friends were I knew not. I

strolled up to the piano and saw what a dark weather-worn instrument it was, inexpressibly dirty, its top scarred by the rims of glasses and cups which had been placed upon it at some more than usually dry rehearsal. Even now it held a plate on which were a chop-bone, some dried-up gravy, and a knife and fork, so I guessed that he had taken his lunch standing and at work. Close to the plate lay a lot of dog-eared music, some hats and umbrellas. Not far away was a rickety old table strewn with letters, alongside the typed copy of the pantomime libretto, dirty and ragged and smeared with fingermarks. A sheet or two of blotting-paper that bore the impress of much correspondence, a penny bottle of ink, a few pens, and a quantity of cards sent up by various people from the stage-door, probably applicants for work,—these were sundry details observable, all indicating the hurry and bustle and indifference to appearances prevailing behind the scenes, which so many people believe is a realm of bliss.

There now began to pass, coming from mysterious corners, an irregular procession of those furred and hatted ladies and children, more fully clad than before, all chattering in groups and all making for the door which led into Drury Lane. I supposed they had done for the day, but no,—they were merely leaving to take a cup of tea or some other light refreshment and would return later for another rehearsal. In their places various people strolled up in twos and threes, pausing on the stage to greet one another,—gentlemen who were clean-shaven, with short hair, clad in a good deal of overcoat and muffler, and wearing soft hats. These I learned were the principals. One was the celebrated George Groves, another the famous Wilkie Bard, favourite comedians drawn respectively from the theatre and the halls, and both entitled accordingly to receive enormous salaries,—a hundred pounds a week, said one; more, said another. They certainly did not wear comic faces,—each was perfectly serious as if he had a heavy weight upon his

mind. Some one said they were rivals, but nothing could be friendlier or more congenial than the tone of their conversation, so I ventured to dismiss rumour as a lying jade once more. They presently entered into the serious business of comedy and made some show of action and gesture while they said things to one another which had evidently been repeated and rehearsed and developed when the pair were alone, and would doubtless be again until they were "part-perfect." Even then men of their fame and calibre must be prepared with any amount of alternative "business" up their sleeves, so that if one wheeze failed, they must eliminate it and supply its place with something else. So uncertain is experience in these matters, so misleading is deliberation, that the likeliest jest may fall flat upon an audience, whereas a bit of impromptu nonsense done to raise the spirits of the performers themselves may prove a "rib-tickler" of the first degree. But the genius of the comedian lies not merely in improvising this precious

nonsense, but in being able to play up and prolong and develop it, and bring in his interlocutor, so that the two can draw out a passing quip into several minutes of infectious humour which shall keep a couple of thousand people night after night rocking with delighted laughter. No wonder that these "stars" prepare so much of their twinkling in private!

These celebrities went their way and the stage grew comparatively lonely in between the afternoon and the evening rehearsals, while the managers conferred in their offices, and various experts stole in and out to correct a stage measurement or take fresh view of things in order to develop a new idea. This conjuring up of scenes and limelight visions out of a cavern of ropes and canvas and darkness seemed the greatest mystery of all. I rubbed my eyes as I settled deeper down into my stall, and wondered how it all was done. Could this great and dingy laboratory of so many trainers and operatives and organized troupes be the scene I had so often contemplated from

a comfortable seat in a well-lit and crowded house? Could this be the realm of fairyland, the home of so many a moving drama by sea and land, forest and garden, the hall of dazzling delights, the haunt of demons, the caves of Ali Baba, the kitchen of Aladdin's mother, a London street, the Park, the race-course, the castle of many a bygone English monarch? Could it be actually the source of tears and laughter? I could hardly believe it possible.

But now a thin, dark, melancholy man, with a very sallow and disappointed visage advanced towards us, and reassured us on a point of interest that chiefly appealed to us. He was one of the managers, and was able to cheer us with the news that a group of people now entering the semi-darkness were the gifted crew to whom was entrusted the preparation of the Harlequinade. The lights were turned up again. Presently they were laughing and chattering and pirouetting near the footlights. I looked at them practising their antics with no little curiosity and amusement, for if I had

met them dealing wholesale in vegetables at Covent Garden, or running a cheap and popular hotel, or selling evening papers at a breathless pace in one of the great news-stands of the London termini, I should have said they were in their normal element. Never for a moment should I have imagined they were clown, harlequin, pantaloon, policeman, and so on. They were short in height, thick-set, clean-shaven, with faces much less comic than the visage I have seen on many a business man. I noticed that two or three of them made grimaces, however, which soon satisfied me as to their qualifications in the way of fun, and one had the most extraordinarily artful wink that ever I saw. It made me laugh to watch for it, let alone to see it. Some of them jerked their round heads to and fro as if they were loose in their sockets, and when they moved, it was with a sort of swing from side to side. One of them skipped down to the footlights,—it was not a walk or a shuffle, nor can I think of a fitting name for the movement. I judged

him to be the head of the troupe, and in an exchange of words, I was presently on the stage again and shaking hands with him. He had an iron grip. He had also a taking smile, and I saw that his front teeth had been damaged and mended with gold. His speech was all gibes or questions, and the accident to his teeth left him with a lisp adding greatly to the comicality of his voice which was of a pleasant middle register, with a certain dryness in it, and a sort of ironic playfulness which I suspected had been cultivated by constant practice. Either Lancashire or Yorkshire gave him his accent. He spoke with great rapidity so that I could not catch half his words,—a habit, I suppose, acquired by the need of losing not a moment when on the stage, for the stage must be kept waiting not a moment lest the audience should protest. Restless he was, too, as I saw later, when he arranged the tableaux for a photographer. He spoke as if he had to make his entrance, or dive down a trap-door at lightning speed, or fly through a window, or run away from an irate

policeman. But he was a hearty, jovial, pleasant man, steeped in his profession and its details.

I was introduced to his wife who now came smiling up to us, a pleasant and good-looking woman of thirty-five or so, who was cast for the part of Columbine, and chatted in a friendly way for a minute or so in the brief intervals of "study." The little slim young man with the pasty face and the close-cropped hair, who was wearing a knitted guernsey under his overcoat, and had turned the end up to make a sort of ruffle and serve him for a collar, was the Harlequin. He was the clown's brother, and carried a lath in his hand. In the most serious and business-like manner the two suddenly joined hands and threw themselves into a bow-like figure with arms joining over their heads and feet elegantly poised.

"Will that do, Bob?" asked the Columbine.

"Yes, my dear; won't it?" this was to me.

I approved, the photographer set a match to his charge of magnesium powder on the top

of a ladder which the stage-hands had brought for him. We were all nearly blinded. Everybody cried "Oh!" and the group was duly recorded on the plate.

Next the clown borrowed from the theatre wardrobe a thick poker of great length and breadth, its end ablaze with red and silver paper rolled round the wood; a string of sausages filled with sawdust and a skin of painted cotton; a small wicker perambulator much knocked about, and containing a dummy baby; some crutches, truncheons, and other implements. I left them arranging these august details and wandered about the great stage, glancing into every corner to satisfy my curiosity. By the prompter's box I caught sight of an iron cauldron from which leapt up red-hot flames that licked the edge of the scenery, and threatened to devour one of the carpenters or mechanics who was gazing down into its depths. On going close to it, however, I found that the flames were strips of gaudy coloured muslin agitated by a fan from

below, while the rim of the cauldron was lined with electric globes of red, yellow, and white. The illusion created by this simple means was amazingly truthful, even at a few feet away, let alone from the distance of the auditorium. I laughed, but the man regarded the fiery pot with a business-like stare, and being satisfied that the infernal mechanism was in working order, switched off the electricity. I gazed up at the column supporting one side of the great arch of the stage-opening, and saw that the inner side of it was lined with buttons and catches and levers and lamps; the prompter told me that from here he communicated instantaneously with all the working parts of the stage. I moved on, examined the carriage of a mimic train which was due that night to take part in a collision, so as to suit the machinations of a villain who desired to kill a race-horse in one of the trucks. I prodded and tapped it and thought for a moment that it was real, but on going to the other side of it, I quickly discovered that only one side of it facing

the audience had any pretence to existence, even by imitation; its back revealed the pasteboard, the bare strips of wood, the rough strips of painted canvas. Wherever I turned, every object I examined was a delusion and a snare; and thinking of the delightful nights I had sat entranced by comedy and tragedy, by pantomime and troupes of clever folks innumerable, I marvelled at the wit of men who by countless ingenious devices could work such magic on the mind. I looked into various little chambers made by the angles of the outer walls and saw mechanics at work. I strolled up to the women who were patiently stitching strips of metal on to the background of gauze which hung across the stage. I sniffed the scent of glue and chips and paint which was all-pervasive and strong. I stood back to admire a pretty cottage covered with creepers and ivy and flowers, with diamond-paned windows, a shady porch, a thatched roof, and quaint old chimneys, and passing in by the gate, found what a hollow sham it was. A

sheen caught my eye, and walking up to the source of it, I found myself looking at a large sheet of celluloid on which were painted many fashionably-dressed ladies and gentlemen sitting on a grand stand, some holding race-glasses in their hands, others staring at me eagerly as though I was a racehorse galloping up to the winning-post. One of the women said it was the background of the great scene at Sandown.

So I gradually worked my way back to the harlequinade in embryo and found the clown engaged in mortal conflict with the policeman, with the poker brandished in his hands as a knight of old used to wield the two-handed sword. After this desperate encounter, they all gathered round in a group with the clown in the middle; he had just thought of something new, and they were as intent on catching the idea and working it out in due order as if there had been gold watches giving away. The central figure pointed his instructions with an extraordinary vivacity of face and feature, and

his face might have been made of india-rubber. In ordinary life, as I had found, he was simply a quiet and genial person with a mobile smile, but here the mantle of his profession was upon him, and being in Rome, or at least in the Roman toga, he did as Rome required of him. It kept up the spirit of the "business," you see.

The group broke up ; and the policeman went away. He was a quiet and retiring person, who seemed as if he could not say "Bo ! " or " Move on ! " rather, to a goose. But he was not unamenable to a quiet dig in the ribs from his principal and was evidently shaping for proficiency in his curious profession. I stood talking to the clown and his wife the Columbine, about this same calling, which was evidently all the world to them. Earthquakes, wrecks, Treasury budgets, political crises were naught to them unless they could be converted into some trick for the stage which would win the plaudits of the audience.

Bob, as he modestly called himself, was

all but born on the stage,—not on a great stage like this, but in some travelling caravan, by some roadside or common.

"Poor old dad," he exclaimed. "I wish he was able to see me now,—clown at Drury Lane!"

"It's the crown of your career?" I ventured.

"Eh? Oh! I see what you mean. Aye, when we get here, we can go no higher."

I smiled, but to Bob it was no laughing matter. The ladder he had climbed up only after many tumbles, and he could show me, he said, striking evidence on his body.

"You want plenty of embrocation in our profession," said he, with a hearty laugh. "A chip off the elbow, a bit out of the scalp,—all the corners have been taken off me long ago"; and he played with three or four gold medals that hung from his watch-chain, some of the prizes of his career. So, being born on the stage, and his father having been a clown before him, he took naturally to this branch of the profession, one which, he explained, had changed

very greatly even since he began. "All his life," was the expression he used.

"How long is that?"

"Nay, that's all my eye! I'm not goin' to give that away. Well, if you must know,—thirty-eight." Then he told me he had "made a hit" at Drury Lane two or three years ago by being blown up from a motor-car, his body and that of the chauffeur being carried to the roof. "Dummies, you know; we were hidden in the car."

I laughed.

"I suppose you have a flying machine this year."

"I ought to—oughtn't we, dear?" to his wife.

"You must have sausages and a poker, I suppose?"

"Sausages are played out. I just have a few hanging out of my pocket, or they wouldn't think I was a clown, but I do nothing with 'em,"—this with an air of scorn. "You must find new things nowadays; they won't have

sausages. We must have a poker, though, and a policeman,—and a baby. We have one of our own, a real one,—haven't we, dear? A girl, bless her! and a big girl too,—risin' nine. We are bringing her out early next year"; and he winked as if to say this was a great secret, only to be confided to circles outside a profession bristling with rivalries. And he told me of the careful training they were giving the little danseuse and the troupe of which she was the centre,—somewhere over a wheelwright's shop in South London, that region near to everywhere which has been the home of many a thousand performers, and seen their struggles and ambitions until they rose by dint of hard work or a lucky fluke, and then passed on to affluence and notoriety, and Lambeth and Kennington knew them no more except as names to conjure with and examples to emulate.

They shook me heartily by the hand as they went off to get "a bit of dinner" before repairing to their evening turn at one of the suburban

halls, and we wished each other good luck. They deserve it.

I turned round for a moment to gaze into the auditorium, a wilderness of silence and emptiness, with most of the seats clad in faded holland. And as I turned out into the streets, thinking of the hard realities of a stage life, it was the world outside, this world of shining shops and preoccupied crowds, that seemed theatrical. They seemed but pastimes and pretence compared with the vast and busy workshop I had left behind.

APPENDIX

"MOBERLY'S"—AND RUGBY IN THE LATE 'SIXTIES*

Looking down on the rows of gaudy covers that clamoured at me from the bookstall my eye lighted on the cheerful orange of *Cornhill*, and picking it up I hurried to my train, and began a tiresome journey. We had to travel two hundred miles and more, and yet here we were gliding into St. Pancras and had scarcely started. Well might I rub my eyes! but such is the magic power of the printed page—

> "With easy force it opens all the cells
> Where memory slept. . . ."

I had dipped at hazard and come upon Mr. Wise's recollections of Rugby in the early 'seventies, and of Moberly, whose name, he tells us, is still toasted where old Rugbeians meet, even in the far-off corners of the spinning globe, in memory of the famous school song that he wrote. Mingling with the hum of wheels as we rush through space once more

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I heard the chords and harmonies, a piano touched with skilful fingers, and a light tenor that many years of training youth had perhaps hurt a little, humming—*tum tum—tum tum—tum tum ti*—

> "Evoe laeta requies
> Advenit laborum
> Fessa vult inducias
> Dura gens librorum. . . ."

And then "*Floreat—floreat—FLOREAT Rugbeia.*" The old words came back in a moment, and I began to sing them too, and cannot wonder that the good people in the carriage took me for some mad minstrel escaped from Bedlam. Abashed, I sang no more, but closed my eyes, and dreamed of Moberly, the old old days, of Rugby in the late 'sixties; and floating over the yawning chasm of more than forty years came many a scene, and many a face; some but poor faint images sadly blurred by Time, others that rose up from the deeps quite sharp and fresh.

For was I not in "Moberly's!"—here he comes, ebullient, swinging along, tall, broad, just a little ungainly, scholar, dreamer, with something childlike in him, eyes spectacled and blue, deep-set and small, talking to himself,

humming snatches of glee and madrigal, with grizzled curly hair, and whiskers—yes I *think* there were whiskers which were then in fashion, and gave the face a pleasant shade like leafy bushes about a house, smoothing sharp outlines, the cold carved flesh we see to-day. Well, never mind—here he is—in clerical garb, loose and comfortable such as the poet or man of letters loves, and with a genial laugh and ready smile, bends down to three small shivering boys who have just been delivered in his study like carrier's parcels one day in shrewd and nipping January—the pictures come and go, so let me catch them on the wing.

So this is *our* study! 'Tis but a few feet square but gives us a pleasant sense of comfort—couch and chairs, shelves and cupboards, a tiny table, books and pictures, all our small possessions—it is a little castle. But listen! without are sounds that fill us with apprehension—the roll of wheels, the crash of boxes, the thud of leather, many voices, shouts of laughter, footsteps racing along the passages, bangings of doors—a whole uneasy world with all its fickle moods and humours—the Rugbeians have come back again to School.

The loud dinging of a bell down below in the courtyard—"Ding—Ding—Dong—Ding

Ding—Dong Dong—Ding ding ding." How peremptory!

We wait till all is quiet, and then creep down and, peering through an open door, see our Hall, bare boards, bare walls, tables laden with great beakers full of small ale, baskets of bread and cheese, and din enough to wake the seven sleepers. We shrink away and wait beneath the glittering stars, when suddenly the shadowy form of Moberly, our only friend, stalks by, and catching sight of us he pushes us in before him. Greetings, Call Over,—a dark and tubby man—old Willum I hear them call him—sweeps up the crumbs, brings in a reading desk—and evening prayers. So good-night—and we three new ones steal silently upstairs to a long and narrow room in which are ten small white beds, and at the foot of each a small black box studded with neat brass nails something like a coffin's, in which we keep our wardrobes; and facing each again as many tiny washing-stands—and we make haste to hide ourselves before the rest come tumbling in, all too excited to give more than a butt or two at the bulging clothes. Then stalks in Top Sawyer, head of the House—the man-boy of the 'Sixth,' lights out—a giggle, a stifled shriek, a sudden cry of pain—and silence—

and the frosty moon that turns Long Room to silver.

So oblivion—for a moment it seems—but there are footsteps echoing in the passage, the door opens, a flash of light—it is old Willum come to call us, and a cold, dark, winter's morning—" Mr. Smith "—" Mr. Jones "—" Mr. Robinson "—" Mr. Brown "—" Mr. Thompson "—and so to the end—and demands an answer too,—" *All* right, Willum " —" Yes "—" Yes "—" M—yes "—" m—m " " oh ! "—" ALL RIGHT "—in piping treble, angelic alto, breaking note of higher teens—all a little muffled by the covering bedclothes.

The Hall, a roaring fire, two great kettles hissing out jets of steam, great baskets of hot rolls, pats of butter by the dozen, rows of tea and coffee pots, no two alike—rows of canisters—each seizes his own, and having brewed his liquor hurries to his place at the tables along the walls. But there is no time to linger, and soon we all troop down the road to Big School and morning prayers, " Call Over " and " First Lesson."

Big School is a sight to see : a vast and sombre chamber, that stretches into space, soaring high above us where brood the winter mists, and lit by cressets of flickering gas ;

boys of every size and shape are pouring in; a narrow way runs through their midst, a sort of buffer state across whose borders it is forbidden to go, in which some Methuselah of eighteen or so does sentry-go with willowy cane in hand to keep back the pressing throng. It is no easy task; unless he be big of frame, or famous for more than letters, he himself may be the butt—such are Power and Place! But so he learns to face the warring world. What a buzzing! What a hum! Such queer noises! How busy are some of the bees in the great hive already!—with eyes bent on open books, giving "construes" to one another of cryptic posers in the classic authors of Rome and Greece, hunting for errant verbs gone wandering down the page, striving to reconcile the yearning noun to some coy adjectival mate, seeking some elfish link that's gone a-missing.

But those, alas! are few in number. Woe be now to him whose ears are of extra size, whose nose is just a bit too short or long or turns up skyward, or has a fiery head, or wears some garment that is not quite cut according to the Cocker of the times. Not then did collars deep and wide enclose the neck, enduing boys with an engaging air of adventitious innocence; no uniformity of clothes, though

they must be of fuscous hues: black the colour of the tie, and straws of white or speckled the general headgear, bound round with ribbons of many colours, according to the sumptuary laws that distinguish House from House, and rank from rank. We new ones are easy to spy out—not for us the straw, but towering tile—the tall silk hat then known as a "boxer" that in such a jostling multitude is quickly ruffled—see!—one has let his drop and there it goes, shot across the buffer state by many a hidden foot, until it is lost beyond recovery. Life is not a good joke for us just now. There is much to learn that is not writ in books—and all standing, mind! no seat or desk to guard you.

Still they come pouring in, and louder rises the general roar, when the clock without begins to strike the warning quarters, and lo! looming through the mists comes the Doctor—"Temple"—"Temple"—"Temple"—I hear them say—the stern and rugged Temple, black and hairy, of middle height, broad of girth, full jawed, with overhanging brow scarred by signs of many an inward battle, an all-controlling eye—who, tasseled cap in hand, gathers up his gown, and mounts up to his throne. Many masters just below, the doors are shut—Silence

—as when the judge comes into court—Prayers—in stern and rugged tones—how sorely needed by the hosts of upturned faces! —each an unknown world within it—a sight to test even the courage and devotion of a Temple.

But take notice of that tallish figure by the doors who stands beneath him—in a plain coarse gown of office, the pale man with a nose that dominates his face as some huge monolith the surrounding landscape. Regard him well, ye tiled ones, for he is more to be dreaded than even Doctors—grim embodiment of Law and Order. 'Tis the Rhadamanthine Patey, the School Marshal *consule Templo*, feared, respected even by the most reckless—sung for his hound-like scent, his never-failing eye, his innate grasp of the rules of Evidence—the all-pervading Patey, silent as the grave, impeccable. Never is he known to miss his mark at School, or Prayers, or Chapel—Ulysses himself with all his cunning could not have got the better of him. So Patey I sing, and honour to his memory, though he cost me several Æneids in my time—let Justice be although the Heavens fall—no wonder my prose gets rather rhythmical when I think of him, just a little dithyrambic. "Here, Sir,"

—"Here, Sir"—Call over—Patey at his tablets.

Big School is empty; each hurries to his burrow in the scholastic warren, some through open doors in the echoing cloisters—some this way and that—I and two other tiled ones to a turret room just by the Chapel end, up and up and into "Lower Middle Two"—a narrow chamber, gas lit, fire, a line of desks along the walls, and facing them an alcove and a throne in which sits our Master in his gown—tallish, loose-knit, quite young no doubt, but oh! so old, so big to us. How grateful we new ones are to him, hiding in the dimmest corner by the door! He has been through Rugbeia's mill himself and knows well our feelings, and all he says in sympathetic tones is: "What's *your* name?"—"and yours?"—and lets us be—that's Lee Warner as I remember him. His the quiet way, gentle shafts of irony, dry strokes of sarcastic humour, answering the fool according to his folly, sometimes indulging in a sally, perhaps a little scornful, but smiling now and then to show his pleasure when he strikes a spark of sacred fire from the flint.

So we new ones hang upon the desk, scarred by many a blade and smeared with ink, and watch, and muse and listen; *viva voce*—

"Specimina" from the Latin poets—Ovid I think this winter morn—something about the changing colours of the dying dolphin ; then the scratching of pens upon the foolscap, the shifting of uneasy feet, coughs and sneezes, the hollow murmurs of soliloquies, some even soothe their pangs by gnawing at the feathery quill—thrice blessed Quill !—best friend of battling boyhood, though plucked from goose's wing, whose spluttering nib leaves teasing diphthong in deceptive ambiguity, and gains the benefit of the doubt for uncertain terminations—gone out of fashion no doubt in these too knowing days. Thank the gods !—the last quarter strikes—the hour—and first lesson is over.

How queer it all is ! There is such freedom, such liberty. We seem to come and go much as we please, our only rulers the round face of the Clock in the old grey Quad, and Patey—even the Doctor bends his shoulders to the yoke. Yet no community is under rule more drastic, though the laws are all unwritten. Oh ! what a lot there is to learn—we pay much heed to Tradition, as becomes those who breathe the air of old Rome and Athens ; we must be humble as our betters have been and take the lowest places ; be modest in address,

bear oppression with a cheerful face and yet hold up our heads—know all the words and phrases that are current coin—and thus with many an ache and pain be run into the mould.

So we go—in and out of the scholastic warren, into this dark burrow and that with books and pads and quills ; or in the hours of relaxation wander arm in arm about the busy town as if we owned it ; all eyes, all ears, but treading warily, meeting many a rebuff to which our tiles expose us so, but somehow, by hook and crook, picking up the ways of the new world. Who is that grave and reverend senior who walks with head bent down in thought ? It is the Head of the School—with rows of stars and daggers against his name in the lists, that signify great honours—yet none seem to heed him much. Who's that ? Every one turns round to look—a hero ? Yes—the Captain of the Eleven. Such a swell—the swell of swells !—tall and fair and broad, and tanned by sun and wind, with a light blue ribbon running round his straw of white—give him the wall ! get off into the road amongst the wheels and horses !

Caps and gowns flit by—the mild Jex-Blake who takes the "Twenty" ; the lithe and sinewy Wilson—smiling—once a senior wrangler says

one—who conjures for us with sine and secant and plays all sorts of pretty tricks with angles; the calm, impassive Sidgwick, the stalwart Robertson, long Papillon with the kindly eyes and gleaming glasses, the beaming Whitelaw who seems so guileless,—"Bobby" they call him—Philpotts, "Dicky" Burrows, "Jimmy" Buckle—they rise up from the deeps like shades—some, alas! must now indeed be in the Lower World—the Park Lane side of those dim regions I am sure, the pleasant fields of Elysium, where (dreadful thought!) perhaps they hear with lurking smile the useless wails of those who would not heed their admonitions.

What temptations lie in wait for us! Our path is strewn with them—the test of character is part of the *régime*. Not the sea-worn mariners of Odysseus ever felt a greater longing for the joys of Circe's marble Palace than did we for the good things of life. Few can resist the lures of the portly Jacomb, or of Hobley lower down the street. The sausage enclosed in flaky crust that melts upon the palate!—the too shallow glass of cream that floats upon the luscious jam!—the brandied cherries eked out with crumbling cake—I sigh to think of them. Eheu! eheu!

Then we may have business to transact—a

call upon our tailor, our hatter, or perhaps it is old Jim Gilbert, who makes the boots and is famous for his footballs; or else we stroll about the great green Close that stretches fair and smooth over many an acre of broad land, fringed with trees, and studded with mighty elms round which the rooks are ever wheeling. Goal posts rise up here and there between which on half-holidays the mighty contests rage—this much-worn hollow is "Puntabout"—they are at practice now and the balls are hurtling at random through the air. The grey line of buildings that have a castellated presence is the School House, and that turret door will lead you to Doctor Temple's study if he beckons—for good or ill as the case may be—beware and don't cut Sunday Chapels, or Patey is sure to mark your absence—and inevitable as Death himself will sound his rat-tat on your door. More masters striding past—Hutchinson, "Old Beaks" his name for short, Arnold—"Plug," the sturdy Bowden-Smith—they have Houses, too, whose roofs peep through the trees—one is "Cock," if my memory does not play me false—for every "House" is for itself, each a castle like a feudal baron's, each with its badge and banner—mortal foes, yet uniting for the common weal.

"Cuckoo"—"Cuckoo"—the leafless groves are filled with the soft and soothing notes. "Cuckoo"—"Cuckoo"——What! the harbinger of Spring in dreary winter time?—ah! 'tis Autolycus, who haunts the roads in search of pence, and is said to be a troglodyte and live amongst the coverts and spinneys of Shakespeare's lovely Warwickshire. His bird-like eye has seen our tell-tale tiles, and hence his war-cry—"Cuckoo—cuckoo—cuck—oo"—and from out his tattered covering brings a fledgeling as callow as ourselves, a brood of mice, some speckled eggs blown long ago—to tempt our changing fancies.

All is new and strange, indeed. That very night a few of us had just built up some Latin verses as Balbus did the wall, each copy differing a little for prudence' sake, and were basely using the Gradus that had helped us to Parnassus as a football for a friendly scrummage, when one bursts in upon us crying like a bellman—"*Singing in the Hall, you fellows*"—and, leaving our snug fireside, down we have to troop in obedience to the call. The Hall is full, the House assembled, lolling in free and easy fashion, and in the highest spirits, sipping the supper ale and eating bread and cheese or using them as missiles. Upon a table stand

two chairs, one tottering on the other; on either side a goodly youth with each a fives bat in his hands—not to beat time with as you might suppose but to spur the quavering songster on. It is no easy task even to ascend the giddy height to which we new ones mount in turn, and then, when nicely poised, with fluttering heart and burning throat try to warble out a song.

In vain is protestation; if memory fails, an application of the hard-faced bat soon spanks it on, or a gentle titillation of the chairs. One begins too low and tries the higher key, to produce top notes that are greeted with discordant cries. Even the most affecting ballad does not move them, though it would bring tears to the eyes of any normal crocodile—"Barbara Allen" is my offering, and for days I never hear the last of her—"Cheer up, Barbara!"—"Cruel Barbara!"—what unholy screeches, wild howls in wailing minors, even cat-calls greet her when she tells the young man she thinks that he is dying—down go the chairs and he dies upon the floor without shriving. We new ones are a doleful lot, but the old ones make amends when called on by the Chairman for a song. The chorus is the point—nothing else matters very much: "The

Captain with his whiskers"—"The mariner who ploughs the angry seas upon the good ship *Kangaroo*"—"The three jolly Post-boys drinking merrily at the Dragon"—"Kafoozleum," a horrid Turk who had a donkey—with effective musical illustrations—and, most popular of all, a ditty about two brothers who were so much alike in form and feature that each was being constantly taken for the other, getting at last into such a state of inextricable confusion that when one of them died the other, still very much alive, was buried in his place—an excruciatingly comic climax that provokes the wildest laughter—

> "They *buried* brother John,
> They *buried* brother John.
> And when I died the neighbours came
> *And buried brother John*"—

Ha! ha! ha! what a good joke! "*They buried brother John*"—ho!—ho!—ho! what a huge joke! what a unique situation!

A paved courtyard, a dark corridor, baize-lined doors divide us from Mr. Moberly, and yet these rousing choruses must surely reach his musical ear; but then *he* does not govern "The House"—we seldom see him except at evening prayers, or outside the precincts hurrying to obey the Clock in the Quad like the

rest of us, or astride his great white nag on half holidays—and now and then he asks us to breakfast with him. We govern ourselves —or rather the seat of authority is at the oval table in the window of the Hall where sit our betters, who rule by laws uncoded, and get prompt obedience—and of course we lower ones owe them service. The Willums—old and young—clean the boots, and wait, and serve us out our rations of tea and coffee, of sugar and candles, and other odds and ends—but we sweep out the great ones' studies. But it is no such heavy task that one need complain —to strew the tea leaves from the pot, to wield the cleansing broom, the feathery duster—only another lesson in the school of life that inculcates the dignity of labour, the need to bend one's unruly will. Nay, it is a privilege to move in these sacred places and see how our betters live, to dust their heavy tomes, their silver cups. Thus is ambition fed until one yearns to soar.

Be careful how you touch the pretty cap of green velvet that hangs on younger antler-tip, decked with golden bands and tassel, and the acorn that is our badge—for it is hard to win. Full of difficulties is the path to the stars—many a battle must you live through,

many a fierce scrummage, many a stinging hack endure before one like it will crown your brow. Its owner has just pinned an edict on the door of the Hall—"Whites *v.* Stripes"—so runs the heading. A bitter day in freezing January, the wind in the east, giving shrewd nips to us poor Spartans with but the chilly ducks to protect our lower limbs, a jersey all too thin, of white or striped with bands of blue. It is the first game of the term. They call it a ball, but it is more like a great leather egg, most difficult to kick, coming at one like a bomb, hard to catch and hard to hold, slippery with the mud of the churned-up field, and ever the object of fierce contention, twisting and twirling in the scrummage—the swaying mass of whites and stripes, butting and heaving until one hears the ribs go crack, legs and feet moving like the shuttle in the loom to get it through the mêlée. Woe now to the shrinking new one who hangs reluctant on the outer rim—the watchful half-backs are just behind—and I need say no more.

But what an appetite rewards us!—how sweet the evening meal—the frizzling sausage on the milky bed of mashed, the juicy cutlet crumbed and brown, the steak and kidney pie well jellied, the ruddy ham—see the bearers

come trooping up the road with the smoking dishes on their heads—the term has just begun, and money jingles in our pockets.

So *Floreat Rugbeia!* Alas! terms come and go so fast—terms short, and terms long; faces change; new boys are grown old; trebles deepen into bass; Temple goes himself—how proud we are to think that he is now a Bishop! —and in tones that falter more than once bids us all good-bye in the old grey Quad—the Clock has struck the hour.

* * * * *

Many a year speeds on—and one day another pupil of Rugbeia and I, going towards Pall Mall, meet him once again by the austere Athenæum, and by some common instinct cap him in the old, old way. Very grim he looks, and frail, and bowed down with the burden of many, many years, but he stops at once, and though we had never faced him except to get our lines for cutting Chapels, I much regret to say, and he knows us not from any other sons of Adam, he shakes us by the hand, and asks our names, and so on. The familiar salutation has touched a chord within him, his thoughts fly far away to the old grey Quad once more, and when he turns to go he gives us both his blessing—"God bless you; God bless you!"

Few there are, I trow, who have been so blessed by an Archbishop of Canterbury in great London's roar, and we both felt humbled, and all the better for it with just a little moisture in our eyes—and my friend particularly had been a pretty pickle in his time, but it is notorious that pickles mix with pickles.

Eheu ! eheu ! these memories stir one to the quick, and now come crowding on each other's heels—but old Willum is shutting the big gates—'tis time for Lock Up.

THE END

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