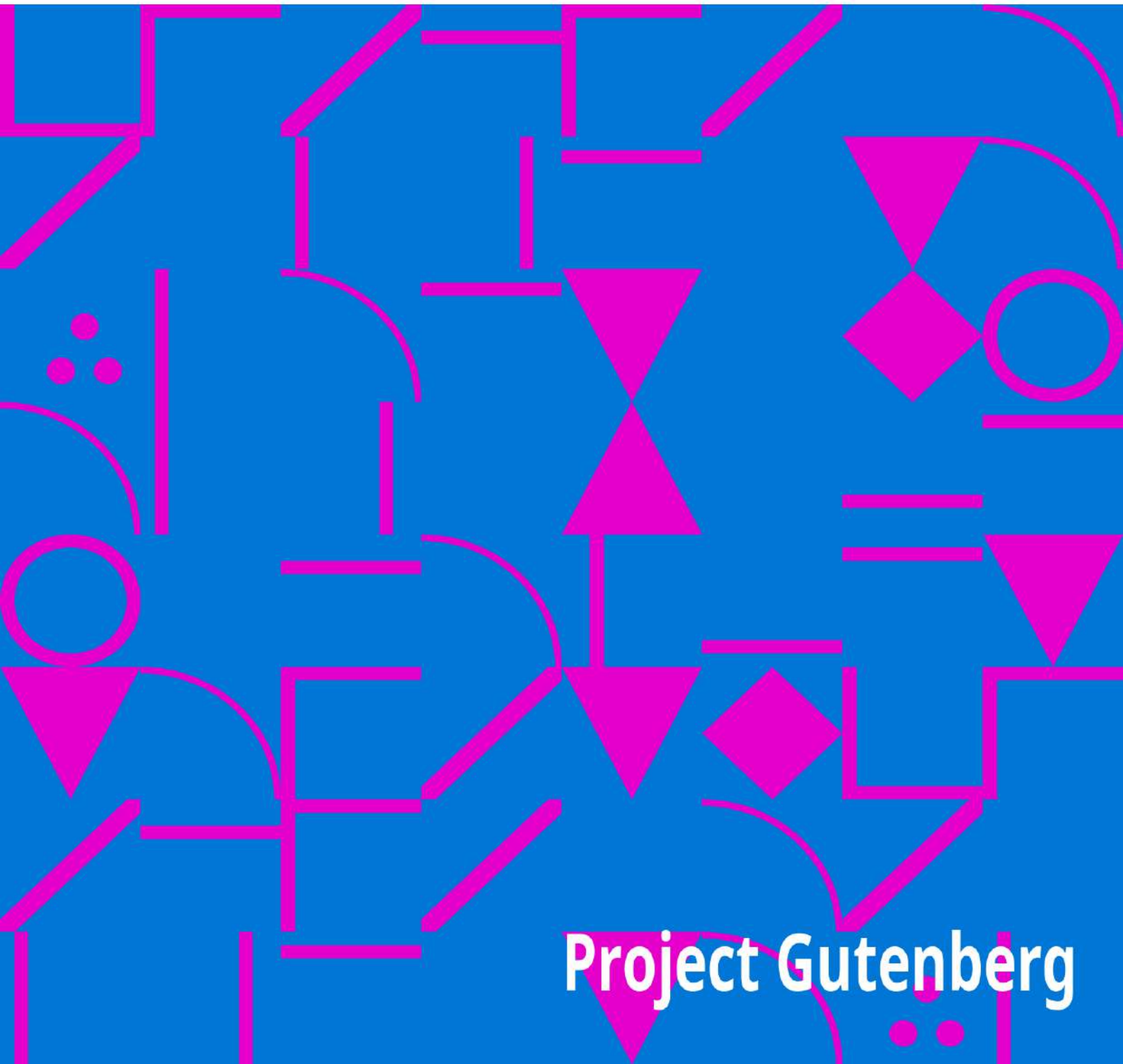
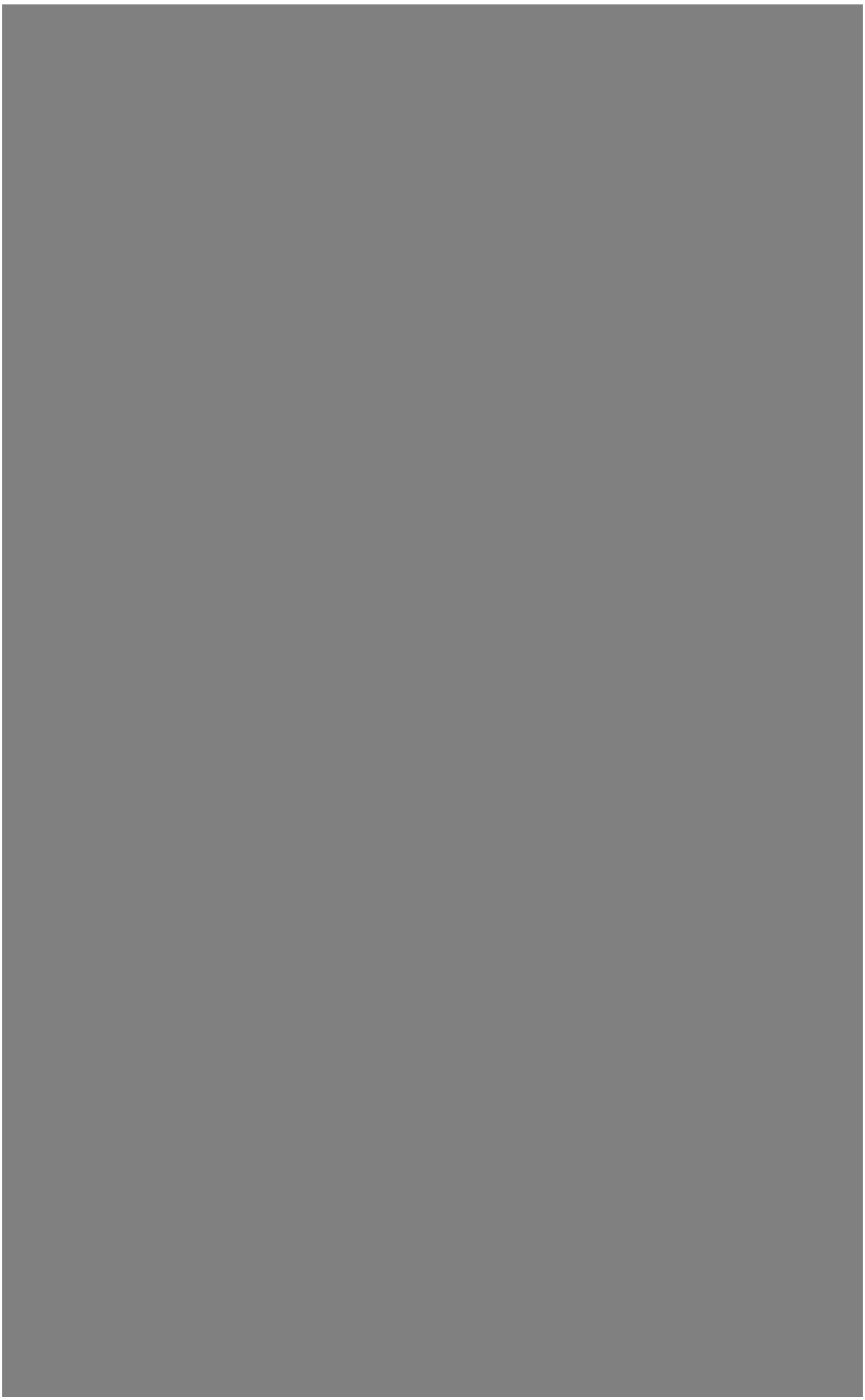
London in the Sixties (with a few digressions)





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London in
The Sixties

(WITH A FEW DIGRESSIONS)

By
ONE OF THE OLD BRIGADE

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.
1860.

LONDON in the sixties was so different from the London of to-day that, looking back through the long vista of years, one is astonished at the gradual changes—unnoticed as they proceed. Streets have been annihilated and transformed into boulevards; churches have been removed and flats substituted; night houses and comfortable taverns demolished and transformed into plate-glass abominations run by foreigners and Jews, whilst hulking louts in uniform, electro-plate and the shabby-genteel masher have taken the place of solid silver spoons and a higher type of humanity. So extensive indeed has been the transformation, that, if any night-bird of those naughty days were suddenly exhumed, and let loose in Soho, he would assuredly wander into a church in his search of a popular resort, and having come to scoff, might remain to pray, and so unwittingly fall into the goody-goody ways that make up our present monotonous existence.

The highest in the land in those benighted days turned up their coat collars and rubbed shoulders after dusk with others of their species in recreations which, if indulged in now, would be tantamount to social ostracism, or imperilling the "succession."

It was, in short, the tail end of the days of the Regency, changed, virtuous reader, for better or worse. It was, nevertheless, distinctly enjoyable and straightforward, for it showed its worst, and blinked nothing in hypocrisy.

The only recommendation for this appearance is its authenticity; every incident passed within (or very near) my ken, for I was a veritable "front-rank man" in that long-ago disbanded army—a veteran left behind when better men have passed away—one of the few who could attend a

muster parade of that vast battalion of roysterers, and who, by sheer physical strength, has survived what weaker constitutions have succumbed to—a living contradiction of the theory of the "survival of the fittest."

It was one morning early in 1860 that I proudly saw my name in the *Gazette*—as a full-blown ensign. I had scanned every paper for weeks, although aware that our late gracious Sovereign (or her deputy) could hardly have had time to decide the momentous question as to whether I was to be a fusilier, a rifleman, or a Highlander, so short was the period between passing my examination and the announcement I so fervently awaited. But I had great Army interest, and so it came to pass that, within six weeks of leaving Chelsea Hospital (where the examinations took place), I held a commission in a distinguished regiment.

To give the number of the dear old corps would at best be misleading, for numerals and the prestige that attached to them were wiped out long ago by one scratch of the pen of that great civilian who remodelled our Army from what it was when it suppressed the Mutiny to what it became before the Boer War.

England at this period bristled with soldiers—bronzed old warriors with beards down to their waists, who had not seen their native shores for twelve or fifteen or twenty years; who, till they were scraped (in conformity with St. James's campaigning ideas), looked fit to do anything, or go anywhere—men who had survived the trenches and the twenty degrees of frost in the Crimea, and sweltered twelve months later at Gwalior, Jhansi, Lucknow, and Delhi, and had at last found their reward, amidst cocked hats, red tape, recruits' drill, and discharge, in that haven of rest, "merrie England."

My future regiment, then on its way home, was no exception to the rule, and I remember, as but yesterday, the comparisons I drew a few weeks later on the Barrack Square of the (then) new barracks at Gosport, between the pasty-faced "strong-detachment" from the depôt and the grand old veterans that towered over them.

And every man-jack of them was possessed of valuable jewels. Where the worthy rogues had captured the loot needs not to inquire, suffice to say that oriental stones worth hundreds were retailed for a few shillings, and found their way to the coffers, and tended to build up the

fortune, of an astute Hebrew who, by “the encouragement of British industries,” eventually became a knight, and died not long ago in the odour of sanctity, rich and respected—as all rich men do.

It was amid these surroundings that I began my military career, despite the fact that every rascal with anything to sell had radiated towards Gosport from every point of the compass.

Gosport and Portsmouth were in those days the first stepping stones in the filtration towards Aldershot, after which, and only after a drill season, the grandest soldiers England ever possessed, were considered as presentable troops.

The barrack squares in those happy days, after a regiment had landed, resembled oriental bazaars rather than the starchy, adamant quadrangles familiar to the present generation. Every forenoon officers and men were surrounded by hucksterers of every care and creed, and one’s very quarters were invaded by Jews and Gentiles anxious to sell or buy something.

“This is the most arakristic trap in the west of England, so ’elp me Gawd; isn’t it, Cyril?” one Hebrew would inquire of another, as the points of an ancient buggy and a quadruped standing in the square were extolled to ambitious youngsters; and “Yes it is, so ’elp me Gawd,” often succeeded in selling a rattle-trap that had done duty in every regiment stationed at Gosport from time immemorial. Old clothes-dealers, too, abounded by the score, ready to buy anything for next to nothing. But some of us youngsters were not to be caught like the veterans who were unfamiliar with depôt ways, and the judicious deposit of a farthing in a pocket now and again resulted in phenomenal prices for cast-off garments till the hucksterers “tumbled,” and the harvests ended; and so, between the goose step and a thousand other delights, the happiest days many of us ever enjoyed (though unaware of it at the time) passed slowly on.

At this period the Volunteers had just come into existence, and, not having developed the splendid qualities they proved themselves possessed of during the Boer War, naturally came in for considerable chaff and ridicule.

As a specimen of the senseless jokes that abounded at the time, I may quote what was generally mooted in military messes, that at a recent

levée the volunteers who had attended had shown so much *esprit de corps* that Her Majesty had ordered the windows to be opened; and it is, I believe, an absolute fact that on one occasion an inspecting officer nearly had a fit when the major of a gallant corps appeared with the medal his prize sow had won pinned upon his breast.

It was the Volunteer review in Hyde Park in 1860 that was responsible for my first appearance in uniform. Determined that the review should lack nothing of military recognition, stands had been erected, for which officers in uniform were entitled to tickets for themselves and their relations. In an unlucky moment the announcement had caught the eye of a sister, with the result that, terribly nervous, nay almost defiant, I was marched boldly down to Bond Street on the day of the review, and, *nolens volens*, dressed at Ridpath and Manning's in my brand new cast-iron uniform.

Conceive, kind reader, a wretched youth—dressed inch by inch by a ruthless tailor in broad daylight on a sunny afternoon, incapable of deceiving the most inexperienced by his amateur attempts of appearing at home—huddled into the clothes, and then hustled into the street by a proud sister and father, and some idea of my abject misery will be apparent to you.

It was at the moment, whilst waiting on the pavement to enter our carriage, that a huge Guardsman passed and thought fit to "salute." My first instinct was to wring him by the hand and present him with a sovereign; then all became indistinct, and I tumbled into the carriage.

The excitement was too much for me—I almost fainted.

A splendid specimen of the Hibernian type in my regiment was a man called Madden (and by his familiars "Payther"), who, as a character, deserves special mention. This giant had not long previously been "claimed" by an elder brother whilst serving in a Highland Regiment, and it was reported that on one occasion, when on sentry at Lucknow, the general officer impressed by his six feet three in full Highland costume, having pulled up and addressed him with, "What part of the Highlands do you come from, my man?" was considerably nonplussed by being informed, "Oi come from Clonakilty, yer honour, in the County Cork." Our colonel, too, was an undoubted Irishman by birth; but had succeeded, after forty years' service, in being capable of assuming the

Scotch, Irish, or English dialect as circumstances seemed to require. In addition, moreover, to an excessive amount of *esprit de corps*, he had the reputation of being the greatest liar in the Army; not a liar be it understood in the offensive application of the term, but incapable of accuracy or divesting his statements of exaggeration when notoriety or circumstances gave him an opening. This failing of "Bill Sykes," as he was called, was so universally known throughout the Army, that one evening a trap was laid for him by some jovial spirits in the smoking-room of a famous Army club.

"Here comes old Bill," was remarked by Cootie, of the Bays, as the Colonel sauntered in with a toothpick in his mouth. "I'll bet a fiver I'll start a yarn he'll never be able to cap."

"Done!" cried Kirby, "and if he doesn't keep up his reputation I'll pay you on the nail, and send in my papers in the morning."

"Good evening, Colonel," began Cootie. "I was just relating a most extraordinary coincidence that was lately told me by a man whose veracity I can vouch for—Shute of ours."

"Indeed," replied the Colonel, filling a pipe—Bill invariably smoked a dudeen at the head of the regiment. "By all means let me hear it."

"It is simply this. Coming home on sick leave in a P. and O. not long ago, the look-out man descried half a mile out at sea what appeared to be a huge box; a long boat was immediately lowered, and when the derelict was brought on deck, conceive the astonishment of everybody in discovering that it was a hencoop, and a live man inside. It was a case of shipwreck it appears, and the man saved was the only survivor of some 180 souls. Rum thing, wasn't it? but some people have infernal luck."

"Yes," replied the Colonel. "I believe I was horn under a lucky star; perhaps you will be surprised to hear that *I* was the man."

A roar of astonishment greeted this admission, whilst Cootie, hastily thrusting a fiver into Kirby's hand, whispered, "I presume you won't send in your papers to-morrow?"

But, despite his peculiarity, old Bill was universally popular. A splendid billiard player, he had in India created such excitement in a match for £500, that even Lord Faulkland, the Governor of Bombay, who never parted with a sixpence without looking at it twice, was said to have

put a gold mohur on it, and in later times I can remember the Club House at Aldershot being crammed to suffocation when the same redoubtable warrior licked Curry the Brigade Major, who till our arrival had no compeer.

One curious experience he had had which he never tired of narrating: "I was once waiting for the d— packet at Dover to take me over to Calais, and at the hostelry I met a d— Frenchman, who asked me if I could 'parley vous,' and I said 'no,' but offered to play him a game of billiards. We had a fiver on it, but I soon discovered that no matter where I left the balls the d— fellow made a cannon. I was only about three ahead of him, so when next I played I knocked a ball off the table. The first time the d— fellow sympathised with me, and picked up the ball; after two or three repetitions the coincidence appeared to puzzle him. 'I can't play if Mooser does this,' he said angrily. 'I can't help that,' I replied, and ran out with a break. He declined to go double or quits, so I pocketed the fiver, and often found myself laughing over it in the d— boat, where I was d— ill."

This persistent swearing may sound curious to the student of to-day, but in those halcyon days everybody swore. The Iron Duke, it is well known, never opened his mouth without a superfluous adjective, and General Pennefather, who commanded at Aldershot in my time, literally "swore himself" into office. On one occasion, when the Queen was on the ground, he wished every regiment so vehemently to the "bottom of the bottomless pit" that it frightened the gracious lady, who sent an equerry to remind him of her presence. The monition had the desired effect for ten minutes, when the bombardment commenced afresh, and brought the field-day to an abrupt termination. The Queen had bolted in sheer trepidation of an earthquake.

Military examinations for direct commissions in those long-ago days were held at Chelsea Hospital, and extended over a week. On the occasion of my public appearance an extraordinary incident occurred. Every precaution, it was stated, had been taken against the papers getting into unauthorised hands, but hardly had the first day passed when every candidate was aware that the tout of a sporting tailor was prepared to sell the paper of the day correctly answered at £2 a head. The conspirators met at the "Hans Hotel," and donkeys incapable of spelling, and with no

knowledge of any language but their own, passed examinations worthy of a senior wrangler.

The miscreant who thus tampered with Her Majesty's stationery was one Pugh, and his employer (if I remember rightly) was one Cutler; but the golden shower came to an abrupt ending, as on one fateful morning (the last day) General Rumley ascended the gallery, and amid the silence of the Catacombs briefly announced:

"The late examination is cancelled; candidates will attend again next Monday."

The consternation that ensued is beyond description. Jolliffe, who, I believe, had been measured for his uniform, did not join for at least a year after, and poor old Plummy Ruthven, who couldn't spell six words correctly, abandoned all further idea of the Army. He was sitting next me on the first day, and I remember as if it were yesterday his whispered inquiry as to the correct reply to a mathematical question: "At what hour between two and three are the hands of a clock opposite one another?" The reply, it is needless to add, had to be "worked out" by figures, but thinking in the excitement he was asking the time I hurriedly whispered, "Twenty minutes to one," and down it went on poor old Plummy's paper. During the subsequent days his papers, I fancy, were vastly improved, as he was a constant visitor at the "Hans Hotel."

The Aldershot of the sixties was a very different place to what it is to-day. Three rows of huts—as the lines of three regiments—constituted the North Camp, and about an equal number and two blocks of permanent barracks represented the South Camp. During the drill season everything else was under canvas, and heaven help those who ever experienced the watertight capacity of the regulation bell tent. I can well remember one night, when the windows of heaven had been open for days, a dripping figure in regimental great-coat and billycock hat appearing in the mess tent with, "The horse is disthroyed, and I don't know what the Jasus to do," and as he dripped at "attention" we realised it was only the adjutant's Irish groom that had been washed out of the temporary stable.

These wooden huts were peculiarly adapted for practical joking. Within a week of my joining whilst contemplating with admiration, previous to turning in, my brand new possessions of portable furniture, I

was astonished by a brick rattling down the chimney. Barely had I dodged it when bang came another, whilst not a sound disturbed the peaceful repose of the camp. "Great heavens," I thought, "there must be an earthquake," and rushing out frantically to give the alarm, I paused, and on second thoughts returned. But in the few seconds that had elapsed there must have been another violent shock, for everything in my room was upside down—the bedding was capsized, my boots were swimming in the tub, table-cloths, carpet, everything one huge mass. It was then that it dawned upon me, "this is the finger of man," and I proceeded to adjust my belongings. "Anything up?" now sounded through the window, and the appearance of two brother ensigns explained the rest. I was never molested afterwards.

Practical joking, however, occasionally assumed serious proportions, and ended in courts-martial, as did the Crawley case. It was on this occasion that Sir William Harcourt first came prominently to notice by the brilliant oration he put into his client's mouth: "Give me back my sword," was the dramatic phrase with which the old bully ended his address. As if Crawley cared one rap what became of his sword so long as the £10,000 attached to his commission as colonel of the Inniskillings was safe.

The Robertson court-martial, of which I was an eyewitness, also created a stir in the long-ago sixties. The colonel of the 4th Dragoon Guards was at the time one Bentinck, who, despite his heirship to the Dukedom of Portland, was about as uncouth a being as can well be conceived. As field officer of the day, no matter how late, he never missed dismounting and walking through the officers' guard room without a word, as if he were inspecting the married quarters, and it was this amiable creature who eventually prosecuted, in conjunction with Adjutant Harran, as harmless an individual as ever posed as a sabreur. Captain Robertson was the son of a Highland laird, and, if I remember rightly, had a very handsome wife. What it was all about I have long since forgotten, though the cloud of witnesses that radiated towards the Royal barracks is in many ways impressed on my memory. Captain Owen—an important witness as he described himself—was an officer of militia, and, more military than the military, he revelled in things military. His staple conversation was military; a sort of peakless cap his everyday head-dress; his very dressing-gown was frogged like a light

dragoon's frock coat; for gloves he affected the buckskin class, and carried glove-trees and pipeclay, at least whilst in Dublin. These peculiarities were grafted on my memory by his having doubled up for six weeks in my solitary room in Dublin. I had spoken to him on one occasion, and in a weak moment invited him to mess. How it all came about I have no recollection beyond finding him located on me; having every meal at my expense, and incurring a mess bill of over £8, which I eventually had to pay. "D— it, old man," he often said, "this is like old times" (when the annual training was on, presumably); "I can't tear myself away from the bugles." And he didn't, till peremptorily requested to go.

Other witnesses of a more desirable type also swarmed for weeks at our mess. Ginger Durant, who had never been out of London since he left the 12th Lancers, was daily to be heard bellowing "To the rag, to the rag" to the tune of "Dixey's Land," and General Dickson, a grand old warrior (happily still as fresh as paint) who commanded the Turkish contingent in the Crimea, champed his bit and cursed the necessity that detained him in Dublin.

At Aldershot was a regiment that was supposed to have stormed some place with ours a hundred years before, and in those days of "Regent's allowances" and tolerably hard drinking the occasion of again meeting in camp could not be allowed to pass without various reciprocal hospitalities. Their colonel was an old toper who never consumed less than fifteen brandies-and-sodas after dinner, and well I recollect hearing a mess waiter, as he helped him on with his coat, expressing the hope, in a whisper, that if a man came before him in the morning for being drunk, he would not think it necessary to give him forty-eight hours cells. But the interchange of civilities was by no means over with the dinner, and a dozen of our heroes insisting on seeing their guests home, deliberately swam the Canal, and their comrades not to be outdone, insisted on seeing our contingent back, till the innumerable duckings restored sobriety and every one retired to his respective hut.

Not having been at the storming in the Peninsula, I had retired to bed early.

The purchase system, however personally delightful, was undoubtedly a very cruel regulation. I myself within seven years passed

over five men who had joined when I was two years old; but the injustice of it never struck me till on one occasion the junior major of a regiment in the same brigade, who had got his commission on the same day as I had, turned me out as subaltern of a guard. But he had not obtained this luck without risking "Yellow Jack," for exchanging to a West India regiment and jumping from bottom to top in every grade by bribing the entire regiment was a thoroughly recognised arrangement by our amiable authorities. D'Arcy Godolphin Osborne was an exponent of this brilliant bare-backed (or bare-faced) vaulting, and despite being the brother of the Duke of Leeds was not an ideal field officer.

"Purchase" literally killed poor 'Gus Anson, brother of the Earl of Lichfield. With a constitution shattered since Lucknow, where he won the V.C., night after night found him arguing against its abolition in the House of Commons; and the almost nightly intimations I sent him, at his request, "that we had enough for Baccarat" did the rest, and I eventually saw the best and bravest of men on his death-bed at Dudley House.

CHAPTER II.
THE TOWER.

ABOUT this time all England was ringing with what was known as the "Trent affair"; 10,000 troops had been ordered to Montreal, of which a considerable portion were Guards, and so it devolved on certain line battalions to garrison London, and we were ordered to the Tower.

It was the regimental guest-night, and all the plate of which the regiment was so proud decked the table in the dark wainscoted room of the Mess House. In the middle of the table stood a centre-piece displaying the soldiers in the uniforms of the days of Marlborough, the Peninsular, and later on, when the hateful Albert Shako did duty as the headgear of British infantry; extending down each side were scrolls containing the names of brave men who had fallen with their faces to the enemy at Quebec, Quatre Bras, and the Redan, whilst flanking the massive trophy were silver goblets varying in size—from those that held a quart down to others of more modern dimensions, indicative of presentations on promotion, marriage, or "selling out." It had, indeed, once been a custom for the last joined ensign to drain the largest tankard on his first appearance at mess; but that was in the days when four bottles under a man's belt was deemed a reasonable amount, and before the Regent's allowance enabled every one to consume nightly a half-glass of port or sherry free of expense.

The Colonel, as may be supposed, was in great form, each of his yarns exceeding in improbability the one preceding it. "Yes, gentlemen," he was saying, "I remember my father saying how at Quatre Bras the regiment found itself confronted by the 88th French Infantry Corps, and he overheard the right-hand man of his company saying, as he bit off the end of his cartridge, 'Jasus, boys, here's a case—here we are opposite the French Connaught Rangers!'"

“I was saying, gentlemen,” the Colonel’s voice was here heard declaring, “that I shall never forget”—and then followed a tissue of fabrications every one had frequently heard before, but which nobody but the worthy old warrior for one moment believed.

Coffee and cigars had meanwhile made their welcome appearance, and as guests began to think of home, and others settled down to muff whist, the ante-room resumed the humdrum appearance so familiar to every one who can speak from experience.

By the irony of fate, also, the regiment was furnishing the guards on this special guest-night, a circumstance that claimed more than one punter; not satisfied with which, the field officer’s “roster” had apparently joined issue and requisitioned the old Major who, on these festive occasions was always a sure hand at loo, and who at the identical moment when he should have been “taking the miss,” was probably bellowing out “Grand Rounds,” to some distant guard in tones that belied his amiable genial disposition.

George, on these occasions, was the recognised organiser, and by herculean efforts had secured some half-dozen recruits to commence loo as soon as old Hanmer returned.

Games of chance—even in the long-ago sixties—were rarely indulged in in the ante-room, which was reserved exclusively for solemn whist for nominal stakes, where the players bottled up trumps, misdealt, and revoked, regardless of all the canons of the game.

“Damn it, sir!” once exclaimed an irate General at an inspection dinner to his trembling partner—the assistant surgeon—“Are you aware that 3,000 shoeless men are tramping the streets of the Continent for not leading trumps?” to which the medico—who was a Kerry man—replied respectfully:

“Oi apalagoise, surr, most humbly; but oi disremembered me abligation.”

“Obligation be d—, sir!” replied the genial old warrior as he lighted a fresh cheroot.

“The Major’s late,” remarked George to a confirmed loo player; “let us go up to my room and get the table ready. Come on,” he continued to four or five others, “we’ll make a start anyhow; he can’t be long.”

The officers' quarters in the Tower can hardly be described as spacious, and so by the addition of chairs from other rooms; with the table lugged into the centre, and brandy and sodas piled on the bed it was not long before some half-dozen punters were securely wedged together and indulging in unlimited loo for stakes that were not always nominal.

The Major, meanwhile, had joined the party and without divesting himself of either cloak, shako, or sword, dashed into the fray with considerably greater zeal than he had displayed when going the rounds. Not that he was any feather-bed soldier; on the contrary, he had borne his full share of the trenches, and then often found himself told off to march to Balaclava with a fatigue party, and eventually to enjoy a few hours' sleep in wet clothes on wet ground, whilst blankets and boots were rotting within six miles, and all because brave men were at the front, and old women were at the back of that rickety machine called the War Office.

Billy Hanmer, amid the ordinary walks of life, was of a chilly temperament; the thermometer in his quarters was never permitted to register less than 65 degrees; he wore flannels all the year round, which in winter were duplicated, even to his socks; when he became excited—which never occurred except at loo, or when suddenly called upon to drill the battalion—the three hairs that were usually pasted across his martial skull rose like the crest of a cockatoo, and he was apt to give vent to expressions seldom or never heard at a bishop's. Swearing in those long-ago days was considered a necessary adjunct to military efficiency, as any one who was under Pennefather when he commanded at Aldershot can testify, and so it was that the Major was now swearing like a trooper. As a fact, he had just been "loo-ed," and was counting some forty sovereigns into the pool, and every sovereign was accompanied by an oath as unique as it was unavailing.

George Hay, sportsman though he was, was also a bad loser, but this evening, in his capacity as host the Fates had happily protected him. The grilled bones that appeared at 2 a.m., and the inordinate amount of brandy and soda that had been consumed, were all put down to him; but the hundred he had won left ample margin for the hospitality, and towards five our hero fell into a profound and refreshing sleep, periodically enlivened by sweet visions of huge pools that he persistently

raked in, whilst Billy Hanmer, divested of cloak, sword, and shako, was swearing till the old rafters rattled.

In those days the club most affected by subalterns was the “Raleigh,” a charming night-house, approached by a tunnel, whose portals opened at dusk and closed reputedly at four a.m., or whenever its members vacated it. And the comfort of that long, delightful single room! Ranged round its entirety were fauteuils, suitable alike for forty winks, or brandy and soda, or the only eatables procurable—bacon on toast sandwiches with a dash of biting sauce. Here might be seen the best men in London percolating through at every moment, and exchanging badinage as brilliant as probably it was naughty—poor old George Lawrence of “Sword and Gown” fame, and Piggy Lawrence, killed not long after in a regimental steeplechase; Fred Granville, who assisted at a once celebrated elopement by waiting at one door of an Oxford Street shop for the beautiful *fiancée* of a wealthy landowner whose brougham had deposited her at another; Freddy Cooper, the best four-in-hand whip of the day; the wicked Marquis who ran through a fortune almost before he was of age; and young Wyndham, another Croesus of the duck-and-drake type; Sir Henry de Hoghton of the red tie and velvet suit who thought he could play ecarté; and King-Harman, then a sinner, but eventually a saint, who died in the sanctity of respectability. These, and a hundred others, all, alas gone to the inevitable dustbin, and yet the old building exists, *externally* apparently the same—the haunt of aspiring youths seeking a club with a past, respectable and cautious to the highest degree, where cheques are not cashed over £5, and the doors close at one a.m. to the tick.

But even in these long-ago days, the membership increased to such an extent that elbow-room had to be sought, and so Sally Sutherland’s, a high-class night-house that abutted on the premises, was eventually taken in, and became the card room of the old Raleigh. To see this room in its glory it was necessary to enter it during the Derby week, where, as far as the eye could reach (and farther), one dense mass of human faces watched the proceedings at the card table, and fought and hustled to pass fivers and tenners and fifties towards building up the mountain of bank notes that flanked either side of the table.

Seated composedly were the two champions with their bankers alongside them, then a fringe ten deep of pasty-faced cornets and

rubicund old sinners with sheaves of bank notes in their hands, while beyond were the “fielders”—landsharks who never played—eagerly watching every turn of the cards to take advantage of any bet that appeared slightly in their favour. “Chalky” White—the master of the Essex as he was ironically called—because he affected horsy overalls, and was once seen on a screw at the Boat Race; Captain Mulroony, an Irish buckeen who joined the “North Corks” to be eligible for “the cloob”; “the Rapparee,” another warrior with a brogue of a pronounced order, all ready to plunge on a reasonable certainty and retail their experiences later on, on their return to Dublin. Needless to add, we youngsters had put down our names *en bloc* for membership as soon as we had settled down at the Tower, and on the memorable night to which we refer were in great force in the long room. George Hay, one of our lieutenants who was being entertained by a venerable member, was wrapped in contemplation as he watched a decrepit old gentleman sipping a gin sling. “That man”—his cicerone was telling him—“fought the last duel in England; look at him now, about eighty if he’s a day, and barely able to crawl down here, and yet fifty years ago he had a drunken brawl with his best friend at Crockford’s, and shot him dead before breakfast at the back of Ham House. Wait till the play begins and you’ll see him ‘fielding’; he never plays, but if he sees a chance, no matter how slightly in his favour, he still pulls out a crumpled fiver and invites you to cover it. He only bets ‘ready,’ and would probably ‘call you out’ if you suggested ‘booking’ it. That man in the blue shirt is the Duke of Hamilton; he only turns up in the Derby week, and has probably just arrived by special train. We call him ‘the butcher,’ because of his shirt and his punching proclivities. He plunges, too; wait a bit till the Leviathans turn up. You’ll see some sport yet.”

“What are you going to do, George?” inquired a youngster; “why not have a look in at Kate Hamilton’s? This is all d— rot, and I’ve put my name down for 2 a.m.”

Putting one’s name down, it may be explained, was a necessary formality indicating at what hour an officer intended to return when the wicket at the Tower was opened and closed, and punctuality was a necessity of the greatest moment.

On one occasion, indeed when “Payther” Madden was on sentry, the wife of an officer who gave herself considerable airs having arrived five

minutes late was challenged from inside by “Who goes there?” “I’m the Major’s lady,” was the haughty response. “Divil a bit do I care if ye were the Major’s wife!” yelled Payther from inside; “you’ll not get in till the wicket is opened agin.”

And the approaches to the Tower in those days were not the broad and well-lighted avenues such as the Eastcheap of to-day; tortuous alleys and dingy, narrow streets had to be traversed, and the garrotter was very much in evidence. Officers returning late carried knuckle-dusters and short blades in their right-hand overcoat pockets, ready to job any footpad who attempted to seize them from behind. Men seldom returned but in parties of twos or threes, and so it was that the Major’s “lady” found herself constrained to hug the walls of the grim old fortress during the early hours of that memorable night in the long-ago sixties.

It was the night after the big race, when Caractacus was responsible for much that followed, that the crowd at the Raleigh was phenomenal, and champagne was being consumed in tumblers from the entrance hall to the card room. Thousands had changed hands within the past dozen hours, and old Jimmy Jopp with his chocolate wig over his left eye was scrambling sovereigns from the doorstep amongst the fair guests of our country who thronged the boulevard. The card room had not as yet entered on its usual function, the window was indeed open in an endeavour to dilute the stifling atmosphere, and a corpulent old lady with a Flemish accent was half-way in the sacred precincts through the combined efforts of a bevy of fair compatriots on the pavement.

“Curse these races,” ejaculated Biscoe, “where have the plungers got to? Nearly one o’clock by G—, and a pile to be got home before daylight.”

This Biscoe was not a favourite in the club; of a hectoring disposition he added to his unpopularity by the pursuit of sharp practices. If he won he invariably found an excuse to retire with his gains, and if he lost he became cantankerous and offensive in his remarks. Some there were, indeed, who went so far as hinting that he was not above unfair dealings. He was partial to shuffling the cards with their faces towards him and placing a king at the bottom of the pack. This he explained was mere force of habit, and when remonstrated with—as he often had been—added that he was superstitious and that one of his superstitions took this

form. No actual act of foul play had ever been brought home to him; he was nevertheless under suspicion, and being otherwise unpopular, his eccentricities assumed a graver form when balanced by hostile critics.

Cheating in those long-ago days was happily a rare occurrence; a man about town might beggar his parents, or drive his wife into the workhouse, and still hold up his head as a man of honour if he met his card debts on the nail; but "sharping" was practically unknown till some years later, when a scandal that thrilled Europe and involved a deep erasure in the Army List was enacted at Nice.

The Raleigh, meanwhile, was gradually simmering down; choice spirits had started for Cremorne or Mott's; the more soberly amused had wended their steps towards Evans's, and the residue might have been classed as either punters or puntees—if such base coin will bear alloy.

Seated in the card room, Biscoe still smoked in his solitude; before him was a gilt-bound volume such as betting men affect, and its contemplation apparently did not afford unalloyed pleasure. "Egad," he muttered, "£4,000, more or less, and not a hundred to meet it with; to-night it's neck or nothing, and if nobody bleeds I shall be unable to face the music on Monday. Ah, De Hoghton," he exclaimed, barely looking up as an apparition in velvet and red tie appeared, "been at Epsom? No? Perhaps you were wise."

Paddy was too clever to suggest a game, knowing as he did the eccentric baronet's peculiarities. "Never mind," he continued, "better luck to-morrow, perhaps. I'm half asleep. Good-night," and he rose as if about to depart.

"What's the hurry?" inquired the new arrival. "If you want to keep awake I'll play you half a dozen games of ecarté, but only for small stakes, mind."

Want indeed! It was what Biscoe had wanted for hours, and as to the stakes, did he not know from delightful experience that if they began at £5 it would not be long before the game was for hundreds, and that his adversary's rent roll might be counted in thousands?

"My dear Sir Henry," replied Biscoe, "name your own stakes. No fear of making them too low. I feel in bad form to-night, and your science will be altogether too much for me."

“Say a pony then,” continued the baronet, and they cut for deal.

Meanwhile the room began gradually to fill, and as the unmistakable flutter of crisp notes—for which no resemblance has ever been discovered—made itself heard in the long room, George Hay and a troop of others sauntered negligently into the room.

“Sit beside me, Colonel,” De Hoghton requested a grizzly, rubicund warrior, “you’ll be able to advise me when they make a pool.”

“And, Rapparee, I want you,” exclaimed Biscoe. “We must show these English boys how we play at Stephen’s Green,” and a fire-eating pronounced Hibernian took post alongside his compatriot.

For a considerable time the luck appeared to fluctuate, and if hundreds were passed across the table on one game, they returned more or less intact at the subsequent encounter. Play was now in real earnest, and stakes were hazarded that were simply appalling. Biscoe, too, appeared to be in for a run of luck, and the excited whisperings between him and the Rapparee left little room for doubt that he contemplated a retreat on the first defeat.

His winnings, indeed, were considerable, and a smile pervaded his hitherto scowling face as he contemplated the Monday’s settling with equanimity. Again the bank was declared, and a pile of notes larger than any of its predecessors lumbered each side of the table; eyes, apparently, had no other vocation than to watch their respective champion’s hands; the ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece became a nuisance, and the grasshopper literally became a burden; the silence of the Catacombs pervaded the entire assembly, when a voice, shrill and excited, was heard: “Do that again, Mr. Biscoe, and I’ll expose you.”

It was the Colonel, who leaning across the table bore down Biscoe’s hands with a strong right arm as he was in the act of shuffling.

“What am I to understand by this?” inquired Biscoe looking towards the Rapparee. “If it’s by way of an insult you’ve met the right boy to resent it. Hands off, sir!” he shouted, as shaking off the Colonel’s hand, he hurled the pack of cards in his face.

“Hold, hold, gentlemen, for God’s sake,” implored De Hoghton, as a dozen men interposed between the belligerents. “Some explanation is surely forthcoming that may avoid a scandal. Colonel, tell those

gentlemen what you saw, and let them decide on the merits before it gets into the papers."

"What I saw I am prepared to prove," replied the Colonel, excitedly; "but even that sinks into insignificance, as far as I am personally concerned, in face of the man's assault. Meanwhile, pick up these cards, count them carefully, and if you don't find five kings in the pack I'll apologise to Mr. Biscoe, and take his assault like a coward."

And then a scramble on the floor began, which was followed by breathless silence.

"Count them, please," requested the Colonel, and sure enough 33 was the result.

"Now turn the faces towards you, sir," continued the Colonel; "and extract the kings." And lo! before a dumbfounded crowd, two kings of hearts were displayed.

"This, gentlemen, is my accusation. I charge Mr. Biscoe with being a card-sharper and a cheat. To-morrow I'll lay my charge before the Committee; meanwhile, I retire and will ask you, Hay, to act as my representative."

The Rapparee meanwhile had been in whispered conversation with his friend, and on the Colonel's departure, addressed himself to Hay.

"Oi presume, surr, your principal will meet my man unless he's a coward, and we shall be pleased to let him fix his own day, either before or afther his complaint to the Committee."

"This is hardly the time, sir, to enter into such arrangements," replied Hay, courteously; "but I vouch for Colonel George doing what is right and honourable."

But one of the younger members seemed inclined to treat the matter as a joke, and turning towards the Rapparee, remarked, "But, surely, sir, you must see that if it's a duel you are hinting at, it would hardly be fair considering that Colonel George is considerably stouter than Mr. Biscoe. May we assume, sir, that you won't object to a chalk mark down each side of the Colonel's waistcoat, and a hit outside not to count?"

"Surr!" scowled the Rapparee.

“Please,” pleaded Hay; “this is not a joking matter, the honour of the Club and of every member who was present is at stake till the affair is cleared up. I appeal to you, gentlemen, one and all, to retire.”

Turning to the Rapparee, and raising his hat, he continued: “My name, sir, is Lieutenant Hay, and I’m stationed at the Tower.”

CHAPTER III.
MOTT'S AND CREMORNE.

LONDON in the sixties possessed no music-halls as at present except the London Pavilion and a transpontine establishment unknown to the West End. This former had not long previously been transformed from a swimming bath into an undertaker's shed, which in its turn gave place to the dingy hall which eventually made the fortune of a waiter from Scott's. But such excitement (!) hardly met the requirements of progressive civilisation, which found an outlet in the Argyll, Cremorne, the Café Riche, Sally Sutherland's, Kate Hamilton's, Rose Young's, and Mott's. It seems but yesterday that one was sipping champagne at Boxall's stall in the Café Riche (now a flower shop adjoining the Criterion) waiting for young Broome the pugilist, who was to pilot one in safety to "the big fight between King and Heenan." In those halcyon days cafés remained open all night, and three a.m. was the hour appointed for our start for London Bridge. What splendid aid was then given legitimate sport by the authorities, as driving through rows of police across London Bridge one reached the terminus in comfort by simply displaying one's ticket. With a pork pie in one pocket, and a handkerchief in another, one's peace of mind was delightful, and hands in every pocket—aye, and knives to cut one out if necessary—were accepted only as a portion of a novel and delightful excitement.

Pitching the ring again in one field and being warned off by the Kent constabulary, how invigorating the tramp through ploughed fields, till again we found a spot—this time undisturbed—in the muddy plains of Sussex. Wisps of straw provided for the more favoured by the attention of their punching cicerones, the biting of King's ear to bring him to "time," the two giants half blind, swinging their arms mechanically, the accidental blow that felled the brave Heenan, and the shameful verdict

that denied him the victory ten minutes previously, the return to the "Bricklayers' Arms"—how vivid it all seems! And yet principals, seconds, lookers-on, where are they?

The Café Riche of the long-ago sixties was perhaps the most successful and best regulated of the haunts of vanished London. Slack to an extreme till about 11 p.m., the huge mass of humanity as it poured out of the Argyll made straight for it. As one traversed the almost impassable Windmill Street along the narrow path kept by a bevy of police, all thoughts turned towards the Café Riche, where the best of suppers, oysters, and champagne prepared one for the more arduous exertions of Cremorne or Mott's. Cremorne in those days was a delightful resort, with an excellent band, and frequented by the most exalted of men and the most beautiful of women. Here might be seen nightly during his stay in London a late ruling monarch (then Crown Prince) whose moustache the ladies insisted on twisting; here, too, occasionally big rows took place, affairs that originated in some trifle, such as the irritation of an excitable blood on seeing a harmless shop-boy dancing in the ring. King-Harman probably was the principal originator of these encounters. Naturally of an amiable but plethoric disposition, a sight such as the above was like a red rag to a bull, and in no time the fight became universal and furious. Gas was turned off, the ringleaders bolted, pursued by police. A run as far as Chelsea Hospital with a "bobby" in full cry was by no means an uncommon occurrence.

On the occasions when exalted foreigners like Prince Humbert were going, the ground in a way had to be salted. Intimation was privately conveyed to certain well-known roysterers at Long's, the Raleigh, and elsewhere, that an exalted personage asked them to abstain from rows; a puncher and two or three bloods were told off to accompany, and a special envoy was instructed to warn Johnny Baum (the lessee) not to be aware of the angel he was harbouring and to resist the temptation of any gush and "dutiful" toadyism; and so on the eventful night Humbert lolled unrecognised through the revelling crowds, whilst ghastly veterans in harlotry twitted him on his huge moustache and thrust cards into his fist as tokens of British hospitality.

Mott's, too, was a unique institution, select it might almost be termed, considering the precautions that were taken regarding admittance. Every man who entered was known by name or sight. A

man of good birth or position, no matter how great a roué, was admitted as it were by right, whilst parvenus, however wealthy, were turned empty away. It was told indeed that on one occasion, being importuned for admission by a wealthy hatter, old Freer, having been requested by the indignant shop-boy to take his card, had replied, “Not necessary, sir. Not necessary. I have your name in my hat.” And so the line that divided the classes in the sixties was religiously respected. In those benighted days tradesmen sent in their bills apologetically, and if a tailor began to importune, a fresh order met the case. Flats were unbuilt, and people did not hear what was going on all day and all night at their next door neighbour’s; inferiors said “Sir,” and “Right you are” was a phrase uncoined; if you dined at Simpson’s or Limmer’s you were served on silver, and no waiter ventured to ask you who won the 3.45 race; club waiters literally stalked one as they approached with a dish, and the caravanserais that now dominate the entire length of Piccadilly had not pulled down club averages nor reduced the prestige that attached to club membership. The great gulf was fixed as immovably as between Dives and Lazarus when Abraham was the umpire, and things probably found their level as well as in these advanced days, when money is everything, and £20,000 judiciously applied will ensure a baronetcy.

The ladies who frequented Mott’s, moreover, were not the tawdry make-believes that haunt the modern “Palaces,” but actresses of note, who, if not Magdalens, sympathised with them; girls of education and refinement who had succumbed to the blandishments of youthful lordlings; fair women here and there who had not yet developed into peeresses and progenitors of future legislators. Among them were “Skittles,” celebrated for her ponies, and Sweet Nelly Fowler, the undisputed Queen of Beauty in those long-ago days. This beautiful girl had a natural perfume, so delicate, so universally admitted, that love-sick swains paid large sums for the privilege of having their handkerchiefs placed under the Goddess’s pillow, and sweet Nelly pervaded—in the spirit, if not in the flesh—half the clubs and drawing-rooms of London.

This remnant of old-fashioned homage was by no means unusual, and at fancy bazaars it was an almost invariable custom to secure the services of the belle of the hour to sell strawberries at 2s. 6d. apiece, which the fair vendor placed to her lip and then pushed between the swain’s. Years later a matronly creature, forgetting that her charms had

long since vanished, essayed to fill the coffers of a charity bazaar by similar blandishments, and as one looked at the hollow cheeks and discoloured tusks one was fain to wonder what the effect of the "treatment" would be on the most robust constitution.

Situated in an unpretentious house in Foley Street, the ballroom at Mott's (as it appeared in the sixties) was a spacious octagon with a glass dome. At the side, approached by a few steps, was the supper room, where between 2 and 3 a.m. cold fowl and ham and champagne were discussed, the fiddlers descending from their loft, and revelry fast and furious took the place of the valse.

Not many years ago, impelled by an irresistible impulse, I visited the hall of dazzling light; a greasy drab opened the street door, and conducted me into a dingy apartment, which she assured me was the old haunt. Sure enough, there stood the dilapidated orchestra perch, and, yet a little way off, the steps that led to the supper room; and whilst I was contemplating them with something very like a lump in my throat, a squeaky voice addressed me, and I beheld a decrepit old man—all that was left of poor old Freer—whom memory associated with an expanse of white waistcoat, essaying hints such as, "Now, then, lady's chain," or hob-nobbing with some beauty, or remonstrating, "Really, my lord, these practical jokes cannot be permitted." This temple of the past may still be seen with all the windows smashed and on the eve of demolition.

Lord Hastings in those far-off days was the chief culprit in every devilry. Beloved by police and publican, he occupied a privileged position; nothing vicious characterised his jokes, and he had but one enemy—himself. His advent at a ratting match or a badger drawing was a signal to every loafer that the hour of his thirst was ended, and that henceforth "the Markis was in the chair." Six cases of champagne invariably formed the first order, and as old Jimmy Shaw shouted, "'Ere, more glasses there, and dust a chair for 'is Lordship," the four ale bar closed in, as it were, and duke and dustman hobnobbed and clinked glasses with a deferential familiarity unknown in these levelling days.

Lord Hastings selected his companions on facial and other merits, and no meeker, more guileless-looking youths existed than Bobby Shafto and Freddy Granville. "Bobby," said the Marquis, on one occasion, when he had arranged a surprise at Mott's, "we must go round to Jimmy

Shaw's. I've to pick up a parcel there, and, look here, old man, you must smuggle it in somehow; old Freer always looks carefully at me, but he'll never suspect you; you must carry it under your cape, and when we get inside mind, don't go down to the supper room. I'll run down for a second, and then join you; you know the spot I showed you near the meter?"

Arriving in Windmill Street, no time was lost in preliminaries.

"Is it all right, Jimmy?" inquired the Marquis, and in reply a cadaverous individual dressed like a gamekeeper respectfully approached his lordship. This was the professional rat-catcher, who traversed the main drains half the day, and supplied the various sporting haunts with thousands of rats nightly.

If a dog was backed to kill one thousand rats in a specified time the supply never failed to be equal to the demand, despite the hundreds that were pitted nightly against ferrets, or produced at so much a dozen for young bloods to try their dogs on.

To see this rat-catcher plunge his hand into a sack full of huge and ferocious sewer rats and extracting them one by one by the tail count the requisite amount into the pit was a sight beyond description, as legislators, cabinet ministers, peers, and army men threw sovereigns at him in payment of the sport supplied.

Carrying a sack in his hand this individual respectfully replied: "All right, my lud, two hundred as varmint a lot as iver I clapped eyes on. Thanks, your lordship, good luck to yer," and he pocketed his fee.

"But are they tied all right?" inquired Bobby, as the parcel was presented to him.

"Right, sir? Why, you've only to slip this string like, and there you are."

"Yes, I know where I should be," suggested Bobby; "but I mean now. I'll be d—d if I'll put them under my cloak for a thousand till you make a regular knot."

"Well, there you are, sir," replied the expert with a pitying smile, as he performed the requisite function.

“Now we’re all right, Bobby,” added the Marquis. “Come on, we must catch them at supper. I’ve got a knife, come on,” and directing the hansom to Foley Street, the conspirators proceeded on their mission.

“Very quiet!” remarked the Marquis, as Freer received them at the door.

“Supper, my lord, supper; and, beg pardon, my lord, no larks to-night, please; we’ve a rare lot here to-night, my lord; Lord Londesboro’ is here with Miss Fowler and no end of toffs.”

“Why, Freer, what are you talking about? Look at me,” and he displayed his white waistcoat, “and Mr. Shafto here, he doesn’t know London or your infernal place. I’m showing him the rounds, Freer; we shan’t stay long,” and, preceded by the unsuspecting old sinner, the pair proceeded as arranged.

Sitting in the deserted room, Bobby scanned the empty orchestra loft, whilst shouts intermingled with the popping of corks arose from the supper room beyond, so shifting his position to nearer proximity to the meter, he awaited the return of his companion.

“All right, old man, they’ll be up in ten minutes, but don’t budge till the fiddles strike up; here’s the knife, blade open; don’t cut till I say ‘Now,’ and bolt like h— once the gas is out.”

The requisite wait was not of long duration. First came old Freer, as, casting a sheep’s eye at the Marquis, he contemplated the orchestra; next, producing a watch, he shouted, “time, gentlemen,” and half a dozen seedy instrumentalists ascended the stairs. The pianist, it was evident, was in his cups, but no notice was taken of this—it being admitted that he played better when drunk than when sober, and had even been known to supply impromptu variations and improvements to the “Mabel Valse” and “Blue Danube” when under the exhilarating influence of Freer’s brut champagne. Then followed a bevy of fair women—Nelly Fowler and her worshipful lord; “Shoes,” who eventually became Lady W—; Baby Jordan, Nelly Clifford, the innocent cause of dynastic ructions twelve months later at the Curragh—closely followed by Fred Granville, Lyttleton, Chuckles, John Delapont, of the 11th, and a mob of flushed men, and as the fiddles began to twang, and the dancers took up positions, the Marquis thought fit to add a word in season. “Talk away, old man, as if it was something private, or some one will be coming up

and spoiling the game; go on, man; now then, look out, is the knife all ready? Shake 'em well out, old man, they can't hurt you; look out, are you ready? Now."

To describe what followed is impossible. Two hundred men and women, and two hundred sewer rats, compressed within the compass of forty feet by thirty, and in a darkness as profound as was ever experienced in Egypt.

Bobby and Hastings meanwhile were driving towards Cremorne with the complacency of men who had done their duty.

Cremorne on a Derby night baffles description; progress round the dancing platform was almost impossible. The "Hermit's Cave" and the "Fairy Bower" were filled to repletion, and to pass the private boxes was to run the gauntlet of a quartern loaf or a dish of cutlets at one's head. Fun fast and furious reigned supreme, during which the smaller fry of shop-boys and hired dancers pirouetted within the ring with their various partners. But as time advanced, and the wine circulated, the advent of detachments of roysterers bespoke a not-distant row. A Derby night without a row was, in those days, an impossibility, and the night that our contingent started from the Raleigh was no exception to the rule.

No man in his senses brought a watch, and if his coat was torn and his hat smashed, what matter? And if he lost the few shillings provided to meet cab fare and incidental expenses the loss was not a serious one, always supposing a cab was to be found, and one was not in the clutches of the law.

"There's King-Harman," remarked Hastings, "let us stick near him; there's bound to be a row before morning, and we may as well be together. Can you run, Bobby? Not with that cape, though; you'll have to chuck that; but what does it matter, it's done its duty, and it's unworthy of a less honourable distinction?"

"Yes," replied Bobby. "I don't fancy wearing it after those infernal rats. But why should there be a row?"

"A row, man," replied his mentor, "of course there'll be a row; what did we come here for but a row? What did King-Harman come here for, do you suppose, but a row? And look here, when they turn the gas out—as they always do—run like blazes; you're not safe till you get to

Chelsea Hospital, and don't run into the arms of a policeman; they sometimes stop chaps running, on spec.," and with these words of wisdom they mingled with the crowd.

The expected dénouement was not long in coming, and in a second, and without apparent warning, sticks were crashing down on top hats, tumblers flying in every direction, and fists coming in contact with anything or anybody whose proximity seemed to suggest it.

The fiddlers had meanwhile made a hasty retreat, the gas was put out, and with the exception here and there of an illumination (a dip steeped in oil), the free fight continued till a bevy of police appeared upon the scene.

Sauve qui peut was then the word, and helter skelter, old and young, Jew and Gentile, soiled doves and hereditary legislators dashed like the proverbial herd of swine towards the gates. Often did this stampede continue for a mile, till straggling cabs, on their way to their stables, picked up the stragglers, and landed them in less disturbed districts. But the night was by no means over, not certainly the Derby night for roysterers like Lord Hastings.

"We'll have a rasher of bacon, Bobby," he explained, as they descended in Piccadilly Circus. "Why, it's barely five o'clock," and they entered an unpretentious coffee-house in rear of the colonnade, much frequented by roysterers and market gardeners.

"*Qui hi*;" shouted a voice as they took their seats in an uncomfortable pew, and old Jim Stewart, of the 93rd, and a companion hailed them from behind a mountain of eggs and bacon.

But their adventures were not to end with this wholesome repast, as, coming out, they espied an empty cart, into which they all proceeded to climb.

"Hi, master," shouted the owner, disturbed at his meal, "that be moine."

"Not it, man," yelled Hastings; "it's mine; jump in," and, without a murmur, the worthy man obeyed.

"Where to, master?" was the next inquiry. "I be going for a load of gravel to Scotland Yard." And within half an hour four bucks with white

ties were shovelling in gravel as if their lives depended on it.

Scotland Yard in those days was a public gravel-pit, and its name did not convey the painful suggestions of after years.

“Where now, master?” inquired the yokel again, and St. John’s Wood was the order.

Here, before a palatial mansion, the cart pulled up, and the load was shot on to the steps. Johnny MacNair, the handsomest man in the Highland Brigade, who was too “exhausted” to be moved, was then pushed into the hall, and the cortège again departed.

To describe further would be a physical impossibility. Exhausted nature, bad wine, possibly the bacon and eggs, all combined to make memory a blank. Suffice that the house was the private residence of a corpulent ratepayer and respected member of St. Stephen’s Church, who appeared in the “Court Directory” as Mrs. Hamilton.

The final episode was the appearance of Johnny MacNair at Rawling’s Hotel at three in the afternoon very irate, and only appeased on being assured that the episode was a blank to others beside himself.

People may say how scandalous all this reads, and how thankful we ought to be to be living in these decorous twentieth century days! But reflect, virtuous reader. The sixties, if apparently bad, were not so bad as the days of the Georges, which again compare favourably with the golden days when Charles (of blessed memory) was King. Vigilance societies did not then exist as now, and fifty institutions with their secretaries and staff had not to be supported by seekers after morality. London was not even blessed with a County Council, and John Burns probably could have robbed a birds’ nest as deftly as the veriest scapegrace in those long-ago roystering days.

Place a file of the Divorce Court proceedings in the scales, add the scandals that occasionally get into print, and, having adjusted them carefully, decide honestly whether the balance is much against the London of the long-ago sixties.

CHAPTER IV.
KATE HAMILTON—AND LEICESTER SQUARE.

THE entrance to Kate Hamilton's may best be located as the spot on which Appenrodt's German sausage shop now stands, although the premises extended right through to Leicester Square.

"Don't go yet, dear," appealed a sweet siren as Bobby, looking at his watch, swore that when duty called one must obey, but eventually succumbed to a voice like a foghorn shouting, "John, a bottle of champagne," and the beautiful Kate bowed approvingly from her throne. Kate Hamilton at this period must have weighed at least twenty stone, and had as hideous a physiognomy as any weather-beaten Deal pilot. Seated on a raised platform, with a bodice cut very low, this freak of nature sipped champagne steadily from midnight until daylight, and shook like a blanc mange every time she laughed.

Approached by a long tunnel from the street—where two janitors kept watch—a pressure of the bell gave instant admittance to a likely visitor, whilst an alarm gave immediate notice of the approach of the police.

Finding oneself within the "salon" during one of these periodical raids was not without interest. Carpets were turned up in the twinkling of an eye, boards were raised, and glasses and bottles—empty or full—were thrust promiscuously in; every one assumed a sweet and virtuous air and talked in subdued tones, whilst a bevy of police, headed by an inspector, marched solemnly in, and having completed the farce, marched solemnly out.

What the subsidy attached to this duty, and when and how paid, it is needless to inquire. Suffice to show that the hypocrisy that was to attain such eminence in these latter enlightened days was even then in its infancy, and worked as adroitly as any twentieth-century policeman could desire.

"Now we're all right," explained the foghorn, as the "salon" resumed its normal vivacity. "Bobby, my dear, come and sit next me," and so, like a tomtit and a round of beef, the pasty-faced youth took the post of honour alongside the vibrating mass of humanity. The distinction conferred upon our hero was a much-coveted one amongst youngsters, and gave a "hall-marking" which henceforth proclaimed him a "man about town." To dispense champagne *ad libitum* was one of its chief privileges—for the honour was not unaccompanied with responsibilities—and Florrie or Connie (or whoever the friend for the moment of the favoured one might be) not only held a *carte blanche* to order champagne, but to dispense it amongst all her acquaintances, by way of propitiation amongst the higher grades, and as an implied claim for reciprocity on those whose star might be in the ascendant later on.

Bobby, it is needless to say, was a proud man. But six months ago he had left school, and it seemed but yesterday that loving hands of mother and sisters had vied with one another in marking his linen and making brown holland bags with appropriate red bindings that were to contain his brushes and other requisites of his toilet. But these had long since been discarded as "bad form," and a dressing case—on credit—with silver fittings had taken their place. It had been a question, indeed, whether the pony chaise would have to be put down to enable the worthy rector to provide the requisite £100 a year that was essential over and above the pay of a youngster in the service, and here was a young scamp swilling champagne like water, whilst the sisters' allowance had been cut down to enable their brother to meet necessary expenses, and the boy that cleaned the knives had to look after the pony vice Simmons, the groom, dismissed. Not that Bobby was vicious by nature; on the contrary, his follies were to be attributed to that short-sighted policy that drives a youth on the curb up to a given moment, and then gives him his head; a lad who had never tasted anything stronger than an aperient suddenly engulfed in a deluge of champagne. In appearance he was delicate almost to effeminacy, with a gentle, courteous address, fair curly

hair waved around his silly head, and he was popular alike with men and women. His good looks were his misfortune, and his amiability of temper led him into numerous scrapes, such as entanglements with designing chorus girls and the accompanying folly of too much champagne with too little money to pay for it. Not long previous to his arrival in London he had fallen desperately in love at Taunton with a strolling actress old enough to be his mother, who played very minor parts, and whose forte was pirouetting and pointing her huge foot at any patron in front whom she desired to signal out for honour. It had taken the combined talents of the adjutant, the rector, and George Hay to buy the sweet siren off with a promise that her son (nearly as old as poor Bobby) should get a berth on a sea-going merchantman. As a fact, he had promised to marry the charmer, and eventually to find money to run a company, and it was only by the accident of the show being in pawn in a Somersetshire village (where Julia Jemima was playing Juliet to a drunken former admirer's Romeo) that an urgent appeal for funds brought the escapade to light.

"Of course," Julia had once said by way of exciting his enthusiasm, "we can't expect you to 'go on' all at once, but in time you could play up to me. You just study Romeo and get up Rover while you're about it, and Hamlet and some of Charlie Matthews's parts—you can easily knock them off, and one part do so 'elp another, dear." Not that Master Bobby had been brought to realise at once the histrionic fame in store for him; on the contrary, he had jibbed considerably at the contemplation of having to don the spangled velvets and tights that constituted the "property" of the strollers, and it was only the herculean exertions of the lovely Julia Jemima—on her benefit night—smiling more bewitchingly, pirouetting if possible more gracefully, and gliding on one toe across the stage till the muscles of her calves stood out like a Sandow's, that poor Bobby succumbed, and vowed that come who, come what, nothing should tear him from the divine creature. Happily our hero had not anticipated the effects of a combined attack of adjutant and father, and so, being rescued from one pitfall, we find him sailing steadily towards another amidst the brilliant scenes at Kate Hamilton's.

"I've been in the profession, dear," Connie was explaining as Bobby leaned over the throne to gaze on her, "and I often have half a mind to go back to it." (She had once carried a banner through the run of the

pantomime at the “Vic.”) The word “profession” acted like an electric shock; the lad blinked as the scales appeared to fall from his eyes; Julia Jemima appeared visibly before him; the spangles, the tights, and the muscular calf in mid-air floated through his brain in deadly proximity, as pulling out his watch with a shudder he bade a hurried good-bye, and dashed off in the fleetest four-wheeler to join the Major’s “lady” under the inhospitable walls of the Tower.

In the long, long ago the entertainments provided by Leicester Square were not of an exciting nature. The “Sans Souci,” Walhalla, and Burford’s Panorama (where Daly’s Theatre now stands) divided the honours till ’51, when Wylde’s Globe occupied the entire enclosure. This huge erection was sixty feet in diameter, and remained in existence till 1861, when it was pulled down to make way for entertainments combining instruction with pleasure.

In 1863 the “Eldorado” Café Chantant, which was leading a precarious existence, put up the shutters, when a section of the (non-speculative) public made the brilliant, loyal, and dutiful suggestion that somebody should erect a “Denmark” Winter Garden as a memento of the Prince of Wales’s recent marriage, but the loyal, dutiful, sycophantic proposal did not commend itself as it no doubt ought to have done, and probably would to-day. The requisite capital was not forthcoming, and so not till 1873 did the new era commence, when £50,000 was offered for the Square by that monument of aspiring greatness, “Baron” Grant, who burst upon the horizon and then fizzled into space as meteors are wont to do.

It is impossible to deny the fascination that Leicester Square has for a considerable majority of Londoners. Up to the days of Charles II. the entire space was composed of rustic hedge-rows and lanes. Then Castle Street, Newport Street, Cranbourne Alley, and Bear Lane came into existence, the Square was railed round, and all the chief duels of the day were fought within its historic precincts.

Lord Warwick, Lord Mountford, the Duke of Hamilton, and Lord Mohun (a professional bully and expert shot), and a host of smaller fry have avenged their honour within its boundaries—and then adjourned to Locket’s Coffee House in its immediate vicinity. This ancient institution

must not be confused with the palatial establishments known as Lockhart's.

In the days of which we are writing, Leicester Square was a barren waste surrounded by rusty railings, trodden down in all directions; refuse of every description was shot into it, whilst in the centre stood a dilapidated equestrian statue that assumed various adornments as the freaks of drunken roysterers suggested. On the north side (where now stands the Empire) was The Shades, a low-class eating-house in the basement, approached by steps, where every knife, fork and spoon was indelibly stamped "Stolen from The Shades" as a delicate hint to its patrons. On the opposite side stood a huge wooden pump, of which more anon. At the adjoining eastern corner were the "tableaux vivants," presided over by a judge in "wig and gown" where more blasphemy and filth was to be heard for a shilling than would appear possible, all within one hundred yards of such harmless (if disreputable) haunts as Kate Hamilton's, which were overhauled nightly. It was many years afterwards (July, 1874) that the barren wilderness was made beautiful for ever by the generosity of "Baron" Grant. One can see him now, arrayed in white waistcoat and huge buttonhole, accompanied by an unpretentious bevy of councillors and Board of Works men, over whom a few bits of bunting fluttered, presenting his gift of many thousands in a speech that was quite inaudible. But, like medals and decorations, gifts in those days were not rewarded in the lavish manner of to-day. Had such a public benefit been conferred now, the donor would have been dubbed a baronet, or a privy councillor at least, with every prospect of a peerage should he again spring £20,000. Apropos of this gift, there was a peculiar sequel. When asked at the time whether he gave or retained the underground rights in addition to the recreation ground, the great man, in the zenith of his success, replied, "Yes, yes; I give it all." Years after, however, when poor and friendless, hearing that underground works had made the subsoil more valuable than the surface, he enquired whether some remnant could not be claimed by him, but was forcibly reminded of the follies of his youth by a prompt negative, and left to die in penury without a helping hand.

Perhaps never was the irony of Fate more clearly exemplified than when, years after, two yokels who were gazing on Shakespeare's monument were heard to say "That's 'im as give the place."

Situated exactly on the site of the Criterion Buffet was the "Pic," a dancing saloon of a decidedly inferior class, where anybody entering (except perhaps the Angel Gabriel) was bound to have a row. Hat smashing in this delectable spot was the preliminary to a scrimmage, and when it is recollected what "hats" were in the long-ago sixties, it will be easily understood that any interference with them was an offence to be wiped out only with blood. Hats, it may be asserted without fear of contradiction, were the Alpha and Omega of dress amongst every section of the community; the postmen wore hats with their long scarlet coats; policemen wore hats with their swallow-tails; boys the height of fourpence in copper wore hats; the entire field at a cricket match wore flannels and hats; and the yokels and agricultural classes topped their smocks with hats. Not hats, be it understood, of the modern silky limited style, but huge extinguishers, with piles varying from solid beaver to the substance of a terrier's coat; and to enter the "Pic" was tantamount to the annihilation of one of these creations. The "Kangaroo," of whom mention is made elsewhere, was a standing dish at this establishment, and to such an extent was his position recognised that many men tipped him on entering to obviate molestation.

The "Pic," despite its central position, never attained popularity, and was the resort of pickpockets, bullies, and "soiled doves" of a very mediocre class. On Boat Race nights, however, an organised gang of University "men" invariably raided it, and by smashing everything balanced the account to a certain extent.

No place of amusement has passed through so many convulsions as the edifice now known as the Alhambra. Erected in the sixties, it began life as a species of polytechnic, where it was hoped that the instruction afforded by the contemplation of two electric batteries and a diving bell, in conjunction with the exhilarating air of the neighbourhood, would attract sufficient audiences to meet rent and expenses; but the venture not having fulfilled the expectations of its youth, its portals were closed, and it next came into prominence during the Franco-German war. Here "patriotic songs" were the *pièce de résistance*, and towards 11 o'clock a dense throng waved flags and cheered and hooted indiscriminately the "Marseillaise," the "Wacht am Rhein," and everything and everybody. Jones, calmly smoking, would, without the slightest provocation, assault Brown, who was similarly innocently occupied, and who in turn resented

the polite distinction. Stand-up fights took place nightly, and, as was anticipated, drew all London to the Alhambra towards 11 o'clock.

These indiscriminate nightly riots attracted, as may be assumed, all the bullies and sharpers in London, amongst whom stands prominently the "Kangaroo," a gigantic black, who was known to everybody in the sixties. This ruffian, who was admittedly an expert pugilist, was the biggest coward that hovered round Piccadilly. No place was free from his unwelcome visits, and his ubiquity showed itself by his nightly appearance at the Pavilion, the Alhambra, the Café Riche, Barnes's, the "Pic," the Blue Posts, the Argyll, and Cremorne. From such places as Evans's and Mott's he was absolutely barred, and the moral effect of the reception he would have received deterred him—in his wisdom—from making the attempt.

His *modus operandi* was simplicity itself; seating himself at some inoffensive man's table, he helped himself to anything he might find within reach; if remonstrated with, he knocked the remonstrator down, and coolly walked out of the room.

On other occasions he would demand money, and if refused, applied the same remedy; if a party were seated at the Alhambra watching the performance, a black arm would suddenly appear over one's shoulder, and glass by glass was lifted and coolly drained. Occasionally he met his match, when, having pocketed his thrashing, he commenced afresh in an adjoining night-house.

A plethora of coloured ex-prizefighters roamed about these latitudes in the long-ago sixties. Plantagenet Green, an admittedly scientific boxer unaccompanied by any heart, was everywhere much in evidence, and Bob Travers, one of the best and pluckiest that ever contested the middle-weight championship, might have been seen years after selling chutnee in the streets. In those unenlightened days prizefighters, although made much of, never forgot their place, and the illiterate abortions in rabbit-skin collars that intrude into every public resort at the present day and dub themselves "professors" were creations happily unknown.

Needless to add that the Alhambra, with its miscellaneous attractions, stood very high in the estimation of our subalterns, or a considerable portion who deferred to Bobby on all matters relating to "form."

Armed with diminutive flags of every nationality in Europe, a select team were one evening enjoying the delights that led up to the “patriotic era,” as sitting around a table on the balcony they agreed upon the rendezvous should circumstances—and the fights—separate them. Ladies, moreover, graced the board, and sipped from time to time the exhilarating fluid that sparkled in various tumblers. George Hay meanwhile was explaining to an interested houri how by an extraordinary coincidence red, white, and blue predominated in most of the National colours of Europe, while Bobby was urging some argument on a fair creature in inaudible tones, when an apparition a yard long, and as black as ebony, passed over his head and deliberately seized a tumbler. Dazed for a moment, and ignorant of the notoriety of the “Kangaroo,” one and all sat spellbound as the ruffian deliberately emptied the glass and replaced it on the table.

George was the first to grasp the situation, as, springing from his chair, he confronted the bully, and inquired: “What are we to understand by this?” But, “What you d— please!” was barely out of his mouth when a swinging blow on the jaw sent him staggering towards the counter.

Dropping his cane and hat, the “Kangaroo” now advanced in an attitude that meant business, and dashing in his long left arm, essayed to fell George with one blow. But his adversary was prepared for this, and springing back lightly, got beyond danger. The “Kangaroo’s” arms, when reposing by his side, reached almost to his knees, and gave him an incalculable advantage with any but the most nimble. Realising this fact, George decided to change his tactics, and to direct all his blows for the neck or body of his opponent; he had been taught, indeed, that a negro’s head is practically invulnerable, but that a swinging slog in the loins would double up the most seasoned. A shower of blows now rattled on the black’s sides, as springing out of danger after every onslaught, the “Kangaroo” began to show signs of distress; standing well out of range, he appeared but to wait the opportunity, and picking up his hat and cane, he bolted down the stairs.

The “Kangaroo” had learnt a lesson, and was profoundly ignorant of the fact that his meek-looking opponent had a heart as big as a lion’s and was a pupil of Ben Caunt.

But patriotism and loyalism of the blatant type are apt to cloy even on the most gushing, and the fever pitch having been attained, the cooling process set in, and then a series of experiments ensued to try and keep up the demand for the disrated Alhambra.

CHAPTER V.
THE NIGHT HOUSES OF THE HAYMARKET.

If any of the Bucks of the sixties were suddenly brought to life and placed in the centre of Piccadilly Circus, no labyrinth could more completely puzzle them than the structural alterations of to-day. Abutting on to where Shaftesbury Avenue commences was a dismal row of houses, with here and there an outlet into the purlieus of more dismal Soho; where the obstruction for the accommodation of flower-sellers now raises its useless head, another block of houses ran eastwards, dividing the present broad expanse into two narrow thoroughfares; the huge monument to the profitable industry in intoxicating drinks takes the place of the ancient "Pic," and the Haymarket, from the exalted position of centre of the surging mass of nocturnal corruption, has descended to the status of a dimly-lighted thoroughfare, with here and there an unlicensed Italian restaurant and a sprinkling of second-class pot-houses.

Instead of the promenade from which strollers are now hustled off the pavement by a zealous police, the strip between Windmill Street and the Raleigh Club was the favoured lounge, and the Haymarket literally blazed with light (till daylight) from such temples as the "Blue Posts," Barnes's, The Burmese, and Barron's Oyster Rooms. This latter place, although palpably suffering from old age and the ravages of time, and propped up by beams innumerable, was the nightly rendezvous of oyster-eaters, where, sandwiched in between "loose boxes" upstairs and down, champagne and other drinks were consumed to excess.

Often amid these sounds of revelry, ominous cracks and groans warned the revellers that all was not right, till on one never-to-be-forgotten night a sound that vibrated like the crack of doom caused a

stampede, and leaving wine, oysters, hats, unpaid bills, every one rushed helter-skelter into the street. Old Barron, staring disconsolately from the pavement at his fast-collapsing house, suddenly appeared to remember that his cash-box was in the doomed building, and rushing frantically in, was seen hurrying out with the prized treasure. And then a crash that might have quailed the stoutest heart rang through the night, and Barron, cash-box, and lights, all disappeared in a cloud of dust that ascended up to heaven. Days after the old man was found firmly clutching his treasure. Let us hope its possession compensated him in his passage across the Styx.

The decorous Panton Street of to-day was another very sink of iniquity. Night houses abounded, and Rose Burton's and Jack Percival's were sandwiched between hot baths of questionable respectability and abominations of every kind. Stone's Coffee House was the only redeeming feature, and, as it existed in those days, was a very spring of water in a dry land.

But it must not be assumed that, although Percival's was a "night house," it was to be classed with its next door neighbours. Here the sporting fraternity radiated after all important events; here Heenan lodged after his fight with Tom King; and one can see him—as if it were yesterday—receiving his friends and backers on the following Sunday with his handsome features incrusted in plaster of Paris and smiling as if he had been awarded the victory he was undoubtedly choused out of.

But perhaps no spot has undergone more structural and social change than Arundel Place, an unpretentious court that leads out of Coventry Street. At one corner now stands a tobacconist's shop, and at the other an eating bar, where hunks of provender are devoured at the counter, and cocoa retailed at a penny a bucket; whilst the court itself is practically absorbed by the Civil Service Stores, through whose windows "gentlemen" may be seen weighing out coffee, and "bald-headed noblemen" tying up parcels.

In the sixties, however, the place had considerably more vitality—after nightfall. On the eastern side stood a public-house of unenviable repute, owned by an ex-prizefighter, to which the fraternity congregated in considerable numbers; whilst at the end furthest from Coventry Street was a coffee-house, whose open portals discovered nothing more

dangerous than an oil-clothed floor, chairs and tables over its surface, and an unassuming counter for the supply of moderate refreshments. During the day a spirit of repose pervaded the entire area; the public-house appeared to be doing little or no trade, whilst the coffee-house was chiefly remarkable for the persistent scrubbing and emptying of buckets that went on, as a mechanical charwoman, in the inevitable bonnet, oscillated to and fro between the door and the pavement. But for the old woman, and an occasional apparition in a startling check costume that flashed in and out between the coffee-house and the pot-house, one might have imagined the entire place was uninhabited, so subdued and reposeful was everything.

Tall and angular by nature, with skin-tight overalls and a coat the colour of a Camden Town 'bus, Jerry Fry was the undisputed landlord of the unpretentious coffee-house, and recognised director of a gang of sharpers who made human nature their study, and scoured the highways and byways nightly in search of profitable quarry. Not that the above costume was the sole one in Jerry's extensive wardrobe, which boasted amongst others the huge cape and whip associated with rustic drivers, a clerical outfit, evening clothes, and a white tie the size of a poultice. Jerry as a strategist was without a rival, and it requires but little effort of imagination to assume that he has turned in his grave times innumerable in the contemplation of the sorry sharpers of the present era who have usurped his functions in the despoiling of their species. Any promising subject that appeared on the horizon immediately became the object of Jerry's personal solicitude, and once the victim's besetting sin was accurately diagnosed, no time was lost in placing a specialist on his unsuspecting track. It was not long after the arrival of the "Line" garrison in London that George Hay was focussed as an inveterate gambler, and as the "Landed Gentry" vouched for his being the eldest son of a county magnate, no time was lost in laying lines in every direction in the hope of catching him. Not that play—in which he was by no means an expert—was his only delight; on the contrary, he excelled in every kind of manly sport, and could hold his own with the gloves with many a man who had the advantage of him in height and weight.

When in the country cards never entered his mind; in London, however, with the fascination ever before him, the temptation was

irresistible, and the three fly-blown cards of a racecourse manipulator or *chemin de fer* at the Arlington held him like a vice whilst the fever was upon him.

It was a sultry evening in September when everybody (except four millions) was out of town that George and Bobby elected to stroll to the West End after an uneventful dinner at mess. Threading their way through the slums that abutted on the Tower, nothing worthy of record occurred till, casually stopping to light a cigar, they were accosted on the threshold of Leicester Square by a courteous individual who asked for a light.

George was nothing if he was not a gentleman, and without waiting to consider why the person should seek a light from him when gas jets were blazing outside every shop, he considerately acceded.

But the stranger apparently was of a sociable disposition, and persisted in hanging on to their skirts and essaying remarks on objects on their way.

"What have we here?" he inquired as, passing Arundel Place, a dense crowd outside the pot-house riveted his attention. "The fight, of course," he continued, "the seconds and backers are squaring up, I expect. Will you step in, gentlemen, it's all right, but I'd better perhaps go in and inquire, they all know me; one minute, gents, by your leave," and he disappeared into the crowded court.

"Shall we go in, George," inquired Bobby, "or have a peep at the 'Pic'? D— it! we must have some sport after twenty-four hours of the Tower."

"Go in? Of course we will if there's anything to be seen," answered George; "I'm half-inclined to shake up my liver by arranging with Ben Caunt to resume my 'studies' at the Tower, and there's one consolation, Bobby, it's not as expensive as the Arlington, and we haven't much to lose if they do pick our pockets."

So summed up the situation Solon George, as their cicerone made his reappearance.

"Right, gents; step this way," intimated the stranger; "but we had best wait awhile in the coffee-house yonder; leave it to me to give you the tip," and without further ado they all entered the hostelry.

George, with all his common sense, was a very tyro in the rudiments of the unwritten law of knavery, and certainly no match for a shrewd London rascal; to enter into conversation with an absolute stranger appeared nothing extraordinary to him, and when a punching match was the basis of the acquaintance, and the chance of meeting certain leading —if illiterate—lights of the fraternity the prospect, conventionalism with him was an infinitesimal quantity, and he entered into the sport with the enthusiasm of a schoolboy.

"But why here?" inquired George, as they found themselves the sole occupants of the oilclothed room.

"Wait a bit, gents, they'll come presently," replied their cicerone; "I've given them the office, but they're a bit busy just now settling up the scores for this morning, maybe." And then he proceeded with what purported to be a personal description of the fight, looking frequently at a huge clock that ticked in the corner, and fervently hoping that Jerry would not be long.

Bobby meanwhile was champing his bit, and bewailing the time that might so much more profitably have been passed at the "Pic," when a man in the immaculate disguise of a coachman walked hurriedly through the room. Peering into every corner, and examining crevices that a cat would have been incommoded in, he hurriedly approached our heroes, and asked excitedly whether they had seen a gentleman such as he described. Without waiting for a reply, he next dropped his whip and rug on to a vacant chair, and whipping out a pack of cards, continued: "It drives me mad to think I should have lost such a stupid game; but I was drunk, gentlemen—forgive the admission—yes, drunk; but he has promised me my revenge here to-night," and pulling out a watch the size of a frying-pan, he contemplated it as if wrapt in thought. Replacing it with a spasmodic jerk, he continued: "Just fancy, gentlemen, this was the simple thing; but I was drunk, alas!—happy thought, 'ware drink," and he gave a halloa such as foxhunters give on the stage, and proceeded to rattle three cards.

"Now, gentlemen, just for fun, which is the knave?" And Bobby, without a check, selected the correct cardboard. "Again, gentlemen, if you please, it will bring my hand into practice; shall we say half a

crown? Thanks!" and again, with the accuracy of a truffle dog, Bobby discovered the card.

Again and again was this farce perpetrated, till Bobby's winnings amounted to £4, and in his generosity he seemed loth to take advantage of such a greenhorn.

George meanwhile had caught the infection and bet and won as the stakes were made higher.

"Five pounds for once, gentlemen? I think I've earned my revenge," pleaded Jerry, and fickle Fortune as if of the same opinion, decided in his favour.

Any one but the veriest tyro would have deemed this a favourable opportunity to stop, but George, as we have seen, had his own ideas of honour; the fever, moreover, was upon him, and, producing the contents of his own pocket, he again backed his opinion.

Gone in a twinkling, he next turned to Bobby, and the lad at once proceeded to supply him with his cash. Meanwhile their original acquaintance whispered imploringly to George to have done with it, but he might as well have spoken to the winds. "D— it, man, if I'm cleaned out of ready money I've still my ring and sleeve links; go on, sir," he continued to Jerry. "I'll bet my jewellery against a tenner."

But fortune was still against our friends, and divested of his trinkets, in his turn he appealed to his opponent.

"Come, sir, I gave you your revenge, now give me mine, and anything I lose I'll give you my cheque for."

But Jerry was of a practical nature; cheques were occasionally stopped, and officious detectives might come to hear of it, so he decided to decline the tempting offer, but promised revenge on the morrow. The first stranger meanwhile came to the rescue. "I know you're a gentleman," he whispered, "and mayn't like to lose those things, why not offer the gent to redeem them to-morrow?"

The idea seemed a happy one, and the party dispersed, on the understanding that at twelve the following day they should all meet at the Pump in Leicester Square.

But our heroes were not yet done with casual acquaintances, as passing along the Haymarket they were again accosted by a man. “Excuse me, gentlemen,” was the abrupt introduction, “I saw you parting company just now with two well-known sharpers; I’m Detective Bulger of the police, may I ask if you’ve been robbed?”

And then the painful truth began to dawn upon the victims that two officers in Her Majesty’s Service had been overreached at a game that a Blue-coat boy would have jibbed at.

The sequel is briefly told. The next day the appointment was punctually kept by all except Jerry, who, oddly enough, deputed another man to explain that he was sending off an urgent telegram, and had requested him (if the coast was clear) to conduct our friends to him.

Followed at a respectful distance by the detective, the jewellery was duly redeemed; but just as Jerry was pocketing the money, a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and he found himself in the clutches of Sergeant Bulger.

George refused to prosecute; his money was however, restored to him, and binding Bobby to secrecy, he thus escaped the chaff that would have cleaved to him for life.

The “Kitchen” was situated in St. Martin’s Court, abutting on Castle Street, now known as Charing Cross Road; adjoining it was a famous *à la mode* house kept by two brothers, each of whom could turn the scale at thirty stone. It was explained by way of accounting for this extraordinary freak of nature that, by never leaving the establishment and inhaling the greasy fumes from night to morning, their pores were constantly imbibing from a thousand sources the oleaginous vapours that conduce to obesity; be that as it may, the entire front of an upper chamber had to be removed to allow of the usual formalities of Christian burial when one of the firm died, and it is doubtful if the place was not afterwards demolished.

Here nightly were to be found actors since known to fame; journalists such as Horace (Pony) Mayhew and his brother Gus, George Augustus Sala—then writing to measure—and a sprinkling of golden calves with theatrical proclivities. The refreshments, of course, left nothing to be desired on the score of satisfying, and *à la mode* gravy in pewter pots stimulated many a jaded reveller during the small hours of the morning.

It was on our way to this refined hostelry that we on one occasion met Polly Amherst, and the sequel was so absurd that I give the story special prominence.

Polly was a delightful companion. Just down from Oxford, he was destined to take up a fat family living in the neighbourhood of Sevenoaks, but being seen one night in a bird's eye tie amid the revels of Cremorne, and the birds of the air having carried it to his bishop, it was pointed out to the worthy fellow that free scope for his undoubted talent was impossible in the Church, and so posterity was the loser of much pulpit oratory that would doubtless have thrilled the present generation.

As we entered the "Kitchen" Jack Coney—a promoted scene-shifter lately come into prominence by his marriage with Rose Burton—was retailing to the assembled revellers the spot which had been kept secret to the last moment where a big fight was to take place in the morning.

"Of course, I'll go," replied George Hay to someone's inquiry.

"I'm too seedy," continued Bobby, who had not spared the punch.

"I, too," added Oliver.

"I should like to, but I daren't," chimed in Polly. And so a detachment was added to the contingent that were piloted by the irrepressible Coney.

Bobby during the past night had, alas! not followed the paths of sobriety, and so it came to pass that the blind agreed to lead the blind, and Polly Amherst and Harry Turner (a genial comedian) agreed to escort him to the Hummums.

Passing Hart's Coffee House we, of course, "looked in," and, sure enough, there was Hastings and a dozen boon companions; but the night air had been too much for many of us; we saw a dozen Marquises and only one boon companion, so taking the wisest resolve we had taken that night, we bade each other farewell on the steps of the Hummums, and proceeded to our virtuous couches.

Arising late on the following afternoon, a circumstance occurred that drove everything else out of my head, and to the elucidation of this inexplicable coincidence are to be attributed the monotonous details I have just described.

It was towards three on the following afternoon, when, having completed a refreshing toilette, my left arm was entering my sleeve that I became aware of a foreign substance that bulged to an abnormal extent the inner pocket of my coat; proceeding to examine the cause with that self-possession for which I was so justly conspicuous, my equanimity was considerably tried by coming into contact with a watch; extracting it carefully, I discovered that it was attached to a massive chain adorned with numerous seals and lockets. Surprised, I continued my investigations, my surprise turning to anxiety as a second watch (a repeater) made its appearance. By this time thoroughly alarmed, I dived again, and out came three or four rings and a purse stuffed full of sovereigns. Fairly staggered, my *sang-froid* left me, and reeling towards the bed, I endeavoured to solve the mystery.

Had I in my cups robbed a jeweller's? Had I picked somebody's pocket? Had I had a row, and after the fray put on my opponent's coat? But every argument failed to elucidate the mystery, and my thoughts wandered to such an extent that in it all I saw a distinct judgment on my back-sliding.

To make matters worse, I knew not where Amherst or Harry Turner resided, and so resolved to have breakfast and await developments.

But breakfast under such circumstances was a sorry farce; every gulp of tea appeared to choke me, and in every waiter who approached I recognised a constable on the track of the burglar. Flesh and blood could not long stand this strain, and my pent-up feelings received a still greater shock by the waiter thrusting a card into my hand. "Ask him in," I replied, and Harry Turner, with a face a yard long, hurriedly shuffled towards me.

"An awful thing has occurred," began the unhappy mummer, "and I've come to you in the hope that you'll be able to explain it. Look at this," he continued, as he proceeded to untie a bundle. "When I was putting on my coat just now I found two watches, a cheque-book, a ring, and a packet of papers. Can you recollect what we did? By Gad, I'm half disposed to go and give myself up. One would get off lighter then, perhaps."

Whilst we were discussing ways and means, a second card was brought to me, and again the waiter was requested to "show him in," and

then Polly Amherst came upon the scene, the ghost of his former self, pale and haggard, but otherwise externally irreproachable as regards white tie and High Church clerical attire. "Billy," he began, "a terrible thing has occurred, and I've come here in the hopes that you will be able to set my mind at rest. Conceive my horror, when opening my eyes this afternoon, to see at my bedside a watch, a pile of sovereigns, and a valuable ring. What silly jokes did we indulge in last night, old man? 'Pon my word as I came here I shuddered as I passed a policeman. The matter can't rest here. I've locked the accursed things in my portmanteau, and now what's to be done?"

But the consolation he received from his dismal companions in no way tended to allay his anxiety. "We have neither of us the smallest conception of how we became possessed of these things," replied Turner, "and it seems to me our only course is to walk round to Bow Street and voluntarily give ourselves up."

Our teeth had now begun to chatter, and, hoping against hope, we agreed it would be best to await George Hay's return, and act as he should advise.

Three weary hours later, George Hay, Oliver Montagu, the irrepressible Jack Coney, and Harry Ashley (afterwards of *Pink Dominoes* fame), returned from the fight, and it having been arranged that the three latter should be permitted to depart before the culprits broke the news to George, a magnum was called for by way of a stirrup cup.

"By the way, Polly," remarked Montagu, "I may as well relieve you of my gimcracks, and, by Gad, it's as well we didn't take them. Did you ever see a rougher lot?" he added, turning to George.

And then a cloud rose from off the countenances of Polly, Harry Turner, and myself; the magnum that had hitherto tasted like jalap appeared as nectar to our lips, and we began to recollect that prior to leaving the "Kitchen" our comrades had entrusted their valuables to us.

We never told our terrible experience.

CHAPTER VI.
EVANS'S AND THE DIALS.

BEFORE the Embankment came into existence, Salisbury Street and Cecil Street—where the hotel now stands—consisted for the most part of lodging houses. Overlooking the river, stairs led to shanties to which wherries were moored, whilst a verandah, running the entire length of the house in which I once had rooms, enabled shade and muddy breezes to be indulged in during the hot summer evenings. At the side could be seen the arches known as Fox Hill, which, still visible from the (now) Tivoli Music Hall, were in those days capable of being traversed for a considerable distance.

In ancient days the haunt of smugglers and desperadoes, it had not lost its popularity with the lawless classes even in the more modern long-ago sixties, and weird stories of murders that had never been discovered, and crimes of every description, were currently reported as of almost daily occurrence in the impenetrable "dark arches of the Adelphi." No sane person would have ventured to explore them unless accompanied by an armed escort, and even Wych Street, Newcastle Street, and Holywell Street were "out of bounds" after nightfall.

The dead body of a female having one morning been discovered, it was currently reported that the assassin was in concealment in the "dark arches;" the police—from information received—were convinced of it, and the authorities, having a mind to probe the mystery, organised search parties, which scattered amongst the labyrinths, and eventually emerged no nearer an elucidation than before.

Passages, it was asserted, led to various exits on the river bank, and extended in an easterly direction to Whitefriars, all of which in later years have been gradually filled up till now nothing more pernicious than

a peaceful beer-store a few yards from the entrance and an occasional board-man who ought to be traversing the street, give signs of vitality to what was once a sink of iniquity.

It is refreshing after this weird retrospect to turn to the modern Adelphi Terrace, where years ago I participated in many enjoyable reunions. Here each Sunday night such lively company as the late Kate Vaughan and her husband, Freddy Wellesley, Billy Hill, Marius, Florence St. John, Sweet Nell Hazel, and other vestals congregated; whilst the "Savages" have made it their headquarters, and can lean over the balcony without risking typhoid, and eventually cross the Strand at no greater risk than an invitation to air their French.

And the changes in the Adelphi suggest the changes that have taken place in other historical resorts, than which nothing has been more marked than in the Burlington Arcade. Here every afternoon, between six and seven, throngs composed of all that made up the pomp and vanity of this wicked world disported themselves. Here Baby Jordan and "Shoes"—since become the mother of a present-day baronet—Nelly Fowler, and Nelly Clifton held court with their attendant squires and lords of every degree. Here at seven the entire mass surged towards the Blue Posts in Cork street and indulged in champagne and caviare toast. Here about the same time Hastings, Fred Granville, and roysterers of a more pronounced type looked in for a breakfast of "fixed bayonets" by way of appetite for the dinner at Limmer's that most of them would barely touch. Here (in Cork Street) a little head might be seen cautiously peeping over the blinds at No. 17 in the hope that some eligible client might seek pecuniary relief before entering on the night's enjoyment. Here in later years the same head, but transformed into the appearance of a Fitzroy storm signal, might be seen more shiny, more haughtily posed, dictating terms to Lairds of Aboyne and owners of Derby favourites. After which the rich man died, and the shekels made by usury have gone (as was only right) to bolster up impecunious subalterns and Christian hospitals.

In the palmy days of Paddy Green, Evans's provided perhaps the only tavern where a weary sojourner might sit in peace and realise that he was surrounded by comfort and tone. Hovering near the door was the genial old proprietor, with white hair and rubicund face, a smile for every one, and capable of passing anywhere for a chairman of directors at

least. Around the walls were the priceless oil paintings belonging to the Garrick, deposited temporarily after the fire that made havoc with that historical building; whilst covering the entire floor were tables where the best (and the best only) of chops, steaks, mealy potatoes, and welsh rabbits, with wines of heaven knows what age, beer, and spirits were procurable.

Nor must the old establishment be confounded with the modern fungus that continued its name under the pilotage of an enterprising Jew, and eventually got closed by the police for developing into an ordinary night house.

To see a genuine old English waiter crumble a huge potato with a spotless napkin creates a pang when one thinks of his German and Italian prototype asking "'Ow many breads you have?" and on being told "one," looking as if he could swear you had had two.

And no accounts were discharged at the time—sit, as one might, from 10 to 2 a.m., and eat and drink variously, and as often as one pleased—all the reckoning was one's own as one imparted it on leaving to the most courteous of butlers at the door.

And then the stage, what comparison is possible between the healthy singing of glees and solos one then heard and the elephantine wit of the modern serio-comic? And poor old Van Joel, who, as the programme explained, was retained on account of past services, retailing cigars in the hall and obtaining fancy prices for "Auld Lang Syne"—how a lump comes even now into one's knotty, hoary old throat at the recollections of these long-agos!

Monotonous as all this may sound to the modern up-to-date sightseer, there was a homeliness and an indescribable delight associated with Evans's that surely the recording angel will not fail to remember when he sums up the sins of the sixties.

Across the market, again, was a hostelry, long since disappeared except in name, "The Hummums," and who shall find to-day such rare old English fare, served on silver by the most typical of English waiters?

The rooms may have been dingy, the smoking-room a little stuffy, but the spirit of Bob Garnham must surely hover over the modern imitation

that has arisen on its ashes and assumed everything but its indescribable comfort.

The approaches to Evans's after dark were by no means free of danger in the long-ago sixties. The market porters, who for the most part were cut-purses and pugilists, were apt to waylay solitary foot passengers whilst awaiting the arrival of the vegetable vans, and I recollect an Uxbridge farmer named Hillyard entering the hotel one night with a broken wrist after being waylaid and robbed in Russell Street.

The old Olympic, hard by, was another nasty place to leave after the performance, except in a cab. Within fifty yards the alleys bristled with footpads, and any foolhardy pedestrian traversing the dimly-lighted Drury Lane or Newcastle Street was pretty sure not to reach civilisation without a very rough experience from the denizens of Vinegar Yard and Betterton Street.

The Forty Thieves were an organised bevy of sirens, whose headquarters were the Seven Dials, and whose mission it was to entice, decoy, and cajole any fool who had the temerity to listen to their cooing.

The Clock House on the Dials, now an apparently well-conducted pot-house, was in those days a hotbed of villainy. The king of pickpockets there held his nightly levée, and the half-dozen constables within view would no more have thought of entering it than they would the cage of a cobra.

If a man lost a dog the reward was offered there; if one's watch disappeared it was there that immediate application was desirable; and if the emissary was not "saucy" he might with luck save it from the melting-pot that simmered all day and all night within fifty feet of Aldridge's horse repository.

The walk through the Dials after dark was an act none but a lunatic would have attempted, and the betting that he ever emerged with his shirt was 1,000 to 60. A swaggering ass named Corrigan, whose personal bravery was not assessed as highly by the public, once undertook for a wager to walk the entire length of Great Andrew Street at midnight, and if molested to annihilate his assailants.

The half-dozen doubters who awaited his advent in the Broadway were surprised about 1 a.m. to see him running as fast as he could put

legs to the ground, with only the remnant of a shirt on him; after recovering his breath and his courage he proceeded to describe the terrific slaughter he had inflicted on an innumerable number of assailants. A scurrilous print that flourished about this time in its next issue narrated the incident in verse by: “Oh, pray for the souls that Corrigan kilt,” etc. Corrigan, it may be added, was an Irishman, and not a particularly veracious one.

Any list of queer fish would be incomplete without introducing the name of Bill Holland, who, although he struggled on till the eighties, was in his zenith in the sixties. Rosherville being too far, and Vauxhall having disappeared, the North Woolwich Gardens came into favour with those who sought recreation of a less boisterous kind than that at Cremorne.

Bill Holland had all his life been a showman; amusing and full of exaggerated anecdote, he had catered for the public from time immemorial; every monstrosity had at some period passed through his hands; every woman over seven feet, and every man under four, had appeared under his auspices: the tattooed nobleman, the dog-faced man, the whiskered lady—all recognised him as master at one period or another. He had “directed” the Alhambra, the Surrey, the Blackpool Gardens, and, in later years, the Battersea Palace, and signally failed with each; but, sphinx-like, he invariably reappeared irreproachably groomed and waxed, with some confiding creature ready to finance him. His constant companion was Joe Pope, an abnormally fat little man, and a brother of the Q.C. who not long ago died. It was the brains of this obese little man, in conjunction with Bill Holland’s assurance, that kept the wheels going for over thirty years.

Across the river at Greenwich were the historical Trafalgar and Ship Taverns, where the famous fish dinners, served in the very best style, were procurable. Only fish, but prepared and served in irreproachable form; beginning with boiled flounder, one progressed by seven stages of salmon in various forms, filleted sole, fried eel, each with its special sauce, till whitebait plain and whitebait devilled found the wayfarer well-nigh exhausted.

It was only then that the folly of ordering dinner on a hungry stomach became manifest, and when the duckling that the smiling waiter had

suggested made its appearance it was almost with tears that one turned away from its pleading savour and reluctantly confessed one's inability to do it justice. And then the coffee on the lawn, and the scrambling for coppers amongst the water arabs in the surging mud below, were adjuncts that never failed in the completing of enjoyable evenings now for ever gone.

Why the resort went out of fashion seems an enigma. Forty, thirty, aye, twenty years ago both taverns were the almost daily resorts, during the summer and autumn, of the highest in the land. In one private room would be heard Her Majesty's judges, cracking jokes as if they were incapable of judicial sternness; in another legislators by the score, who had travelled down by special steamer to eat and drink as if no such things as fiscal questions existed; whilst in the public room cosy couples dined, and roysterers smoked and joked, and yet all has passed like a pleasant dream. The Trafalgar has long since been pulled down, the Ship, if not closed, is very much changed for the worse, and Londoners swelter annually with the patience of Job, and are apparently indifferent to the delightful resorts they have lost.

It was during a May meeting, when rural deans and other provincial Church luminaries were staying at Haxell's and the Golden Cross Hotels, that Satan prompted certain roysterers to raid these establishments when the reverend lodgers might be supposed to have retired to their respective closets. It was Nassau Clarke—a subaltern in the Life Guards—who conceived the brilliant idea, and collecting Jacob Burt, Charlie Buller, Lennon, and a few other well-known roysterers, we proceeded towards the Strand. The joke, if such it may be called, was to change every pair of boots reposing peacefully outside the various doors, and the development—which none of us was likely to witness—was the scare that would ensue at 8 a.m., when sober ecclesiastics might be expected to swear at the prospect of being late for their platform prayer at 9. Charlie Buller in those days was reputedly the handsomest man in the Household Brigade; an excellent bruiser, and not slow of wrath, he was, moreover, a desirable companion when altercations were likely to occur.

Lennon, on the other hand, was not a cockney, and only up on leave, but willing to assist in anything original or exciting. Not many months previously he had been awarded a brevet-majority and the Victoria Cross for a conspicuous act of bravery at the Taku Forts. I lost sight of him for

years, and when I again met him he had left the Army and fallen apparently on bad times. In consideration of his past services, he was nominated years later for a Knight of Windsor; but the poor old fellow was “not himself” when he went down to be installed, and the appointment was cancelled. He was an excellent actor in comic parts, and has a son, I believe, on the London stage.

The winter of ’61 was an unusually severe one, and the river that washed the walls of the grim old Tower was covered with a thick coating of ice, which in its turn afforded a convenient asylum for the dead cats and other refuse that drifted upon it from the neighbourhood of the adjoining wharves. Locomotion in those pre-Embankment and underground railway days was not so convenient as now, and as cabs had practically ceased running by reason of the mountains of snow intervening between the Tower and the Monument, I had, together with a few boon companions, decided that the time had come for a migration, and went in for “first leave.”

And the choice we had made was by no means an unhappy one, for the weather that had made existence in London well nigh intolerable had driven the woodcocks into the coverts, and we all declared that a week of such surroundings would compensate for all the vicissitudes we had undergone from Kangaroos, Tower, and five o’clock bacon and eggs in London. The “route,” too, had come, and we reasoned, not unwisely, that the journey to Ireland was at best an unpleasant one, and that if we delayed, 1000 to 60 were by no means extravagant odds that we might get no leave at all.

It was about a fortnight after this that, having returned to grimy old Lane’s, I received a characteristic letter from my old chum, George Hay. “Most of my time” (he wrote) “is spent in accompanying the old squire on his various peregrinations over the estate, and by pointing out various agricultural developments that were absolutely necessary, or structural alterations that would improve the holdings. He leads me to understand that my place was on the spot I would one day inherit, and the fitting moment would arrive after I got my company. ‘D— it, sir,’ he would continue, ‘in my time no eldest son remained longer than a year in the army unless he was prepared to pay £10,000 over regulation for the regiment as Cardigan did.’

“‘But in the infantry, sir,’ I suggested, ‘things are different. Promotion is slower, and I can’t help thinking that the bonds that unite officers to the regiment are stronger than is usually the case in the cavalry. But I see no prospect of my company till we are under orders for foreign service, and we shan’t be at the top of the roster for another two years at least.’

“‘I have nothing to say against the line, sir,’ he would reply, ‘except that your officers can rarely ride to hounds.’

“‘But surely, sir,’ I answered, ‘there are other virtues you will not deny to the linesman; in garrison towns they at all events appreciate hospitality, and don’t insult worthy folks by accepting their invitations only to turn them into ridicule. You may remember the story of a young puppy who replied to a kindly hostess by “The King’s never dance, and the King’s never sing,” and this in a regiment, forsooth, where every man-jack of them was a shopkeeper’s son, and which was known as the “Trades Union.”’”

Great excitement meanwhile prevailed at the Tower; the route had come, the mess was closed, and everybody was packing in preparation for an early departure for Ireland. Transports in those long-ago days were not the floating palaces inaugurated years later by the Indian troopers. Cranky steamers—whose principal industry was the transporting of pigs and cattle—were hurriedly chartered by the War Office, and with the men packed like herrings, and the junior officers billeted amongst the band instruments, regiments proceeded at five knots an hour from London to the Irish ports.

The Colonel, during these preparations, lost no opportunity of describing his experiences when last stationed in Dublin; how he and certain boon companions were within an ace of being tried for their lives for throwing into the Liffey an old watchman deposited in a sentry-box; how they started the “Pig and Whistle” in Sackville Street, run on lines that would shock you, virtuous reader; their nightly visits to the “Quane’s” Theatre, where Mikey Duff performed *Hamlet*, and declined to accede to the demands of the gallery for “Pat Molloy and the roising step” with the indignant retort: “D— yer oise, what do you expect for toppence;” the orgies of “Red bank” oysters at Burten Binden’s, and the dinners at the Bank of Ireland, when the regiment furnished the guard;

how old Bill, after a drinking bout, would stamp through every corner of the guard-rooms, cursing at everything, and winding up by the consumption of half-a-dozen brandies and sodas, and “very different to what it was in the Peninsula!”

“Payther” Madden, too, was holding forth on what he would show them in Cark, if “plase the Lard the rigimint was quarthered in the ould station,” and went on to describe how Barny Magee “wad come on and sing at the Hole in the Wall with a gaythaar in his fist, looking for all the world like a hamstrung moke,” and how the gallery would shout, “For the love of dacency, Barny, dhrop yer concertina and pull up yer stockin’,” and how Mrs. Rooney, bless her soul, would pass yer the toime of day with that grace—so genteel loike, so obsarvent—as ye paid toll to go in, with: “God bless you, Carporal, it’s you that has the lip,” or ilse: “Go an wid ye, Carporal, for a flirrt that ye are.”

“A sort of bloomin’ sing-song,” suggested a cockney comrade, “but give me London, with ’er bloomin’ orange peel and hashfelt, with ’er boats down to North Woolwich, with yer gal on yer knee and a new clay in yer face; a pint of shrimps maybe, and a pint of ale down yer neck, and no bloomin’ guards.”

Amid these conflicting sentiments the regiment quitted the Tower.

And what a delightful station the Dublin of the sixties was; here Lord Carlisle as Lord-Lieutenant reigned supreme, and though compelled by usage to keep up the mock court, with its mock “Master of the Horse” and “Gentlemen at Large,” diffused hospitality like the fine old English gentleman he was.

Nightly the captain and subaltern of the Castle Guard were invited to the Viceregal table, during which the kind old man clinked glasses and invited his every guest to take wine with him. How His Excellency could retain his head after all these courtesies was once a marvel till it transpired that the huge decanter before him was the weakest brandy and water diluted to the exact colour of Amontillado. And then the whist that followed at sixpenny points, when His Excellency rigorously prevented his partner—and his partner only—from seeing every card in his hand. How refreshing it all was!

No contortions short of dislocating their necks could prevent his adversaries from taking advantage of the dishonest opportunity, for the

old gentleman cracked jokes throughout the entire rubber, and claimed and paid his sixpences with the scrupulousness of a confirmed gambler.

Among the Viceregal staff were some inflated specimens of vice-flunkeydom. Foster, Master of Horse, whose death occurred lately, was reputed as not knowing one end of a horse from another, and never ventured on a purchase for the Viceregal stables, at Farrell's or Sewell's, unless fortified by the close proximity of Andy Ryan or some other horse-coper. Burke, a Gentleman at Large and an ex-colonel of militia, was another warrior of the offensive type, and I shall never forget the scene when a youngster of the 16th Lancers at one of the levées gave him a peremptory order when he was officially glued to the staircase, under pretence that he mistook him for a flunkey. But the matter was not to end there, and before the réveille had ceased blowing at Island Bridge he was waited upon by a fiery buckeen to demand satisfaction on behalf of Kornel Burke.

Captain Stackpool (everybody had a military title) was another Dublin curiosity. Member of Parliament for Ennis, he affected Dublin and the delights of the Unoited Service from one year's end to the other. Dublin, he assured me, was the most "car-driving, tea-drinking, money-spending city in the world," and he was not far wrong.

Lord Louth, who weighed eighteen stone, and stood five foot seven in his stockings, had served some years in a kilted regiment; but he, too, has long since been gathered to his fathers.

About this time an amusing incident occurred to Lord Louth. The very best of fellows, his vanity was insatiable, and only London-built clothes were good enough to set off his graceful figure.

In the 14th Hussars was a diminutive cornet who also patronised the same tailor as Louth, and both these dandies—as appeared later—had telegraphed on the same day for a pair of the most bewitching trousers in preparation for some social event to which they had both been invited. Conceive the consternation of the two recipients when at the last moment a pair of diminutive pants revealed themselves to the enraged peer, and a garment sufficiently voluminous to engulf three Deal boatmen reached the expectant cornet. This latter was known as the "Shunter" from the extraordinary talents he developed later as a gentleman rider, and still later as a hanger-on of Abingdon Baird.

One of the most brilliant surgeons that Ireland or any other country has ever produced was just coming into prominence in those long-ago days. Dr. Butcher, who in appearance resembled the portraits of Disraeli in his younger days, was known professionally to nearly every man in the garrison; of the most enthusiastic type, he thought nothing of producing two or three stones from his waistcoat pocket and exultantly explaining that he had that morning taken them from certain patients' interiors, and nothing gave him greater offence than refusing to attend one of his private séances. But the most marvellous operation he ever performed was on Billy Deane, of the 4th Dragoon Guards, who, having consulted every specialist in Europe, appealed to Butcher to save his arm and enable him to remain in the service.

A fall whilst hunting had resulted in the disease of the elbow-bone of the left arm.

"Nothing but taking your arm off will save your life," was the universal fiat.

"D— nonsense!" was Butcher's retort, and he cut a square clean out of the elbow.

Within six months Billy's bridle arm was stronger than the other.

CHAPTER VII.
THE RATCLIFF HIGHWAY.

SOME months had elapsed since the regiment landed in Ireland, when one of those inscrutable ways of Providence gave another opportunity of renewing one's London experiences, and obtaining a month's leave in the height of the drill season for the purpose of visiting the Exhibition of '62. The temptation so gratuitously offered was altogether too much for me, and, in conjunction with the rest of the Army in Ireland, I gratefully seized the opportunity of "studying" the various exhibits of foreign countries, and applied for leave for that specific purpose.

Limmer's, where a select band took up its quarters, was at this time one of the chief resorts of young bloods and subalterns, for the most part of the cavalry, who revelled in sanded floors and eating off the most massive of silver.

Entering the coffee room on the afternoon of our arrival, I was greeted by a cheery voice, and descried Hastings lingering over his breakfast. Truth to say, his lordship had not a robust appetite. The mackerel bone fried in gin, and the caviare on devilled toast remained apparently untouched, whilst a *hors-d'œuvre*, known as "Fixed Bayonets"—of which the recipe is happily lost—failed to assist his jaded appetite; alongside him stood a huge tankard of "cup," and pouring out a gobletful for his newly-found chum, and gulping down a pint by way of introduction, he gasped: "By Gad, old man, I'm d— glad to see you! To begin with, you must dine with me at 8—here. I've asked Prince Hohenlohe and Baron Spaum, and young Beust and Count Adelberg, and if you'll swear on a sack of bibles not to repeat it, I expect two live Ambassadors—it's always as well" (he continued in a confidential tone) "to have a sacred person or two handy in case of a row with the police. First we go to Endell Street—to Faultless's pit. I've got a match for a

monkey with Hamilton to beat his champion bird, The Sweep, and after that I've arranged with a detective to take us the rounds in the Ratcliff Highway. No dressing, old man; the kit you came over in is the ticket, and a sovereign or two in silver distributed amongst your pockets; you're bound to have a fist in every wrinkle of your person—why, if you're dancing with a beauty she'll be going over you all the time. I often used to laugh and shout out, 'Go it, I'm not a bit ticklish!'—still, what the h—does it matter?" And his lordship sucked down another libation to the gods.

"I suppose you can speak French or German; if not you can try Irish—not that it matters, for I expect Fred Granville and Chuckle Saunders, and Hamilton is sure to bring a mob, so I think we may count on having the best of it if it comes to a row. How long are you up for? A month, eh? Oh, well, then we're right for the Derby, and I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll go down the evening before—the night before the big race amongst the booths is the nearest approach to hell vouchsafed to unhappy mortals."

Punctually to time our party assembled, and it would have been difficult for the unenlightened to have realised that the gaitered, flannel-shirted, monkey-jacketed assembly embraced diplomats, peers, and obscure Army men who have since made their mark in history. Here might have been seen Charlie Norton, the youngest and handsomest major in the service, who years after developed into a Pasha amid the Turkish gendarmerie; Ned Cunyinghame, in the zenith of his fortune, dilating (with the dessert) on the superior attributes of Nova Scotia baronets, and how an ancestor had once told the Regent "it was a title he could neither give nor take away;" Count Kilmanseg, the best whist player that ever came out of Hanover; Prince Hohenlohe, a charming attaché just beginning his career; Baron Spaum, the best of the best, now Commander-in-Chief of the Austrian Navy, and president of the recent Anglo-Russian Arbitration in Paris; Count Adelberg, a genial Muscovite, who considered *menus* superfluous, and once shocked a very correct hostess by exclaiming "*Je prends tout*," and a host of others unnecessary to enumerate. Presiding at the head of the table was the genial young Hastings—not yet a married man—faced, as vice-president, by Freddy Granville, whose wavy hair, gentle manners, and frank and English

appearance were boring their way into the hearts of the best women and men in Society, except, perhaps, the strict Exeter Hall school.

To approach a cockpit, even in the long-ago sixties, required a certain amount of discretion, and so it came to pass that the sporting team broke up into twos and threes, and by a series of strategical advances by various routes, arrived within a few minutes of each other at the unpretentious portals in Endell Street. Descending into the very bowels of the earth, the party was considerably augmented by his Grace of Hamilton's contingent, and within half an hour, the spurs having been adjusted and all preliminaries arranged, the two champions faced one another in the arena.

Ten minutes later it was a piteous sight to see the brave old champion Sweep attempting to crow, although he seemed aware he had received his quietus.

Suffice to say Hastings won the wager, and the party hurried eastward, leaving the brave old bird like a warrior taking his rest.

One of the most popular pastimes of the long-ago sixties was going the rounds of the dens of infamy in the East End and the rookeries that then abutted upon the Gray's Inn Road. In this latter quarter, indeed, there was one narrow, tortuous passage that in broad daylight was literally impassable, and to escape with one's life or one's shirt was as much as the most sanguine could expect.

The Ratcliff Highway, now St. George's Street East, alongside the Docks, was a place where crime stalked unmolested, and to thread its deadly length was a foolhardy act that might quail the stoutest heart.

Every square yard was occupied by motley groups; drunken sailors of every nationality in long sea-boots, and deadly knives at every girdle; drunken women with bloated faces, caressing their unsavoury admirers, and here and there constables in pairs by way of moral effect, but powerless—as they well knew—if outrage and free fights commenced in real earnest. Behind these outworks of lawlessness were dens of infamy beyond the power of description—sing-song caves and dancing-booths, wine bars and opium dens, where all day and all night Chinamen might be seen in every degree of insensibility from the noxious fumes.

The detective who was to be our cicerone was known to every evil-doer in the metropolis. Entering these dens when not in pursuit of quarry was to him a pilgrimage of absolute safety, and a friendly nod accompanied by "All right, lads, only some gents to stand you a drink" extended the protection to all who accompanied him. A freemasonry, indeed, appeared to exist between these conflicting members of society whereby, by some unwritten code, it was understood that when either side passed its word every one was on his parole to "play the game."

The first place the explorers entered was a singsong in the vicinity of Nile Street, but it was evidently an "off night," for, with the exception of a dozen half-drunken men and women, the place was practically empty. As we entered, however, a sign of vitality was apparent, and the chairman announced that a gent would oblige with a stave; but the cicerone with commendable promptitude called out, "Not necessary, thank you all the same," and prompted his followers to lay five shillings on the desk. But the compliment was not to be denied, and a drunken refrain soon filled the air, which was absolutely inaudible, except:

"She turned up her nose at Bob Simmons and me."

The next place was infinitely more interesting—the "Jolly Sailors," in Ship Alley. "A dozen," explained our cicerone as he tendered a coin, and our party awaited admission. "Keep your money, sergeant," was the ominous reply. "Of course, I know you; but we've got a mangy lot here to-night; they won't cotton to the gents. If they ask any of their women to dance it will be taken as an affront, and if they don't ask them it will be taken as an affront; leave well alone, say I. Most nights it might do, but not to-night, sergeant; the drink's got hold of most of them, and there's a lot of scurvy Greeks about who will whip out their knives afore you can say what's what."

"Nonsense, man," cut in Bobby, "we don't want to have a row, we've come for a spree; there's the money, we'll take our chance." The Baron also, who prided himself on his mastery of our vernacular, interposed with: "Posh, I snaps my finger at eem! Am I afraid of a tirty Greek? Posh! All our intent is larks; we want no rows. Posh!" And regardless of the friendly monition, our party trooped into the room. The scene that presented itself was not an encouraging one; perched on a rickety stool

was a fiddler scraping with an energy only to be attained by incessant application to a mug of Hollands that stood at his elbow, and to which he appeared to resort frequently. Polkaing in every grotesque attitude were some twenty couples, the males attired for the most part in sea-boots and jerseys, their partners with dishevelled hair and bloated countenances, all more or less under the influence of gin or beer; here and there couples, apparently too overcome to continue the giddy joy, were propped against the wall gurgling out blasphemy and snatches of ribald song, whilst in alcoves or leaning over a trestle table were knots of men, smoking, cursing, swilling strong drinks, and casting wicked eyes at the intruders. "'Aven't they a leg of mutton and currant dumplin's at 'ome wi'out comin' 'ere?" inquired a ferocious ruffian. "What for brings 'em a-messing about 'ere, I'd like to know?"

"Blast me if I wudn't knife 'em; what say you, lads?" replied a stump-ended figure, stiffening himself.

"Bide a while, lads; let's make 'em show their colours. What cheer, there?" shouted a huge Scandinavian, as a contingent detaching itself from the main body lurched towards the explorers.

"What cheer, my hearties?" sang back Hastings, and, with a diplomacy that might have done credit to a Richelieu, the entire party were fraternising within a minute.

"The Jolly Sailors" was admittedly the most dangerous of all the dens, even amid such hotbeds of iniquity as "The King of Prussia," "The Prince Regent," "The Old Mahogany Bar," "The Old Gun," "The Blue Anchor," and "The Rose and Crown," and had decoys in all directions to lure drunken sailors or foolish sightseers within its fatal portals. Situated at the extremity of Grace's Alley, it led directly into Wellclose Square, a *cul de sac* it was easier to enter than to leave; but sailors of all nationalities are admittedly the most impressionable of mortals, and happily in the present case the *sang-froid*, the unexpected rejoinder, the devil-may-care bearing, disarmed apparently their rugged hostile intentions, and within half an hour visitors and regular customers—Germans, English, Scandinavians, and nondescripts—were shouting:

"What's old England coming to?
Board of Trade ahoy!"

What any of us knew of the Board of Trade or the Mercantile Marine history does not say.

The opium dens in this delectable quarter were situated higher up at Shadwell, but the charms of the “Jolly Sailors” proving too much for our heroes, they elected to explore no further.

How different is the entire neighbourhood to-day! The very name Ratcliff Highway has disappeared, and been replaced by that of Saint George’s Street East; where constables once patrolled on the *qui vive* in twos and threes a solitary embodiment of the law may now be seen, strolling along in a manner that once would not have been worth an hour’s purchase; where drunken sailors in sea-boots and knives at every girdle lurched against inoffensive pedestrians, unwashed women may now be seen at corners knitting stockings, whilst unsavoury tadpoles are constructing mud-pies in the gutter; here and there may still be seen an inebriated foreigner and rows of loafers—with a striking resemblance to the “unemployed” hanging about the public-houses, but the solitary specimen in blue seems to exercise a salutary hypnotising effect, all which (justice demands) shall be placed to the credit of these enlightened days. Not that this welcome change has been long arrived at; not four years ago a respectable tradesman, Abrahams, a naturalist, of 191, St. George’s Street East, was attacked at 2 p.m., within fifty yards of his own door, and succumbed to his injuries within twenty-four hours, and even to-day to ostentatiously show a watch chain passing certain corners, say Artichoke Lane, would not be without danger; but when all is said and done, there is much to interest the seeker after novelty by a visit to the Ratcliff Highway of to-day. Here at the “Brown Bear” may now be seen the rooms, once devoted to orgies, filled to their utmost capacity with canaries sending up songs to heaven purer far than those of the long-ago sixties. Continuing along St. George’s Street will be found Jamrach’s menagerie, whence filter most of the rarities that find their way to the Zoological Gardens; and the place is no ordinary bird shop, but a museum of information in more ways than one. Here one large room will be found stuffed with bronzes and curios from all parts of the world, which every American visiting London, who fancies he is a critic, does not fail to inspect; for Mr. Jamrach—like his father—is an authority, and a naturalist in the highest acceptation of the term.

Lovers of animals will not regret a pilgrimage to “the Highway,” a pilgrimage which, by the aid of the District Railway and broad, electric-lighted streets, is no longer attended with discomfort or danger.

CHAPTER VIII.
THE BOOTHS ON EPSOM DOWNS.

WHILE racing men have gained by the railway's close proximity to the course, others are now deprived of many of the sights there used to be seen along the road. From Westminster Bridge to the historical heath was almost one continuous panorama of life, joviality, cheer, and fun; every hedgerow was lined with open-mouthed yokels, gaping at the "coves from Lunnon" of whom they had heard so much, but had never before seen; every ditch supported a natural artificial cripple; every beerhouse was fronted by holiday crowds quaffing ale and inviting one to join; and to cap all this, the miles of vehicles with their accompanying dust gave every one the complexion of chimney sweeps, despite veil, artificial nose, and other guises incidental to a real journey by the road.

The party Lord Hastings had organised was a thoroughly representative one: Fred Granville, Peter Wilkinson, Ginger Durant, Fred Ellis—not yet blossomed into Howard de Walden—Bobby Shafto, The Baron, Young Broome (on duty), and a host of smaller fry; all united in one purpose, one aim—to enjoy life to its uttermost limit, and to lose not one fleeting moment of the night preceding the first summer meeting at Epsom. Booths in those wicked days *were* booths, not devoted as now to penny shots with pea rifles and the excitements permitted by our prudish legislature, but receptacles of every conceivable impropriety, to recount many of which would shock you, virtuous reader.

Here were gipsies of the old original form, who, if permitted to tell a modest girl her fortune, invariably wound up by informing her "she'd be the mother of six," dancing booths, and tableaux vivants booths; booths where sparring and booths where drinking might be indulged in freely, booths where terrible melodramas were given, gambling booths, and thimble rig booths; roulette and three-card establishments, where every

vice come down from the days of Noah might be indulged in without let or hindrance.

Leaving Limmer's in the afternoon, and proceeding by easy stages, we reached the Downs shortly before eight. No time was lost in commencing business, and within an hour we were assisting at the erection of a theatre booth, whilst a "fragment" here and there was being rehearsed.

"And what does your Lordship think of that?" inquired a perky little man who had known the Marquis as a patron at a dozen other meetings.

"Splendid, Simmons," replied his patron; "but why such serious scenes, why not a jolly jig with sailors; poor Nelson, surely he's out of place?"

"By no means, my Lord; on the contrary, my audiences will 'ave it, and if only Mr. Fuljome would act up to 'Ardy's part it would bring down the 'ouse. It's this way, my Lord: Nelson says: ''Ardy, I'm wounded mortually,' and then, of course, ''Ardy must say melancholy like: 'Not mortually, my Lord?' But blow me if I can get it right."

"D— the drama," replied the kindly Marquis. "Have you any one to send for a drink?" And pulling out two or three sovereigns the party proceeded on their quest.

"Now, my Lord," was next shouted from a roulette booth. "We're just ready for the swells. Step in, gentlemen," continued a flash-looking rascal. "Ah! Mr. Broome," he added, as he recognised the ex-puncher, "no need for you, I hope."

"Perhaps not, Levi," replied the Marquis. "But we've got some quarrelsome chaps about; best be prepared." And again we proceeded on our pilgrimage.

"Where are the tableaux vivants, Hastings?" inquired Fred Ellis. "Damn it, we must show the Baron." But at this moment an unrehearsed incident occurred which stopped the future legislator's eloquence.

"A word with you, Mr. Wilkinson," said one of a couple of very shady individuals. "You'll 'ave to come wi' us," he whispered, "a capias at the suit of Beyfus—£200 with costs."

“Hang it,” replied Peter, with *sang-froid*. “Can’t you let it stand over? If you nab me now I can’t pay, but if you’ll let me alone till after the meeting I’ll make it right, not only with Beyfus, but with you. Now, look here, here’s how it stands. On Saturday next I’m going down with Lord Hastings to Castle Donington. Send one of your chaps after me, and about eight send a letter in to me. We shall be at dinner—leave the rest to me.”

On the following Saturday, the programme was carried out in its entirety. Peter Wilkinson was staggered by the unexpected blow! and the much-abused, kindly Hastings paid the claim on the spot.

And this is how boon companions requited the most generous man in England. What wonder, the target of friends and foes, the deepest well at length dried up! The party meanwhile had moved on, and Peter on rejoining it found the champagne flying with a vengeance. The site was a huge marquee, the audience the entire company that had journeyed from London, blended with the full strength of the tableaux vivants cast.

Fred Ellis was holding forth in an incoherent speech till, offended by being told to “shut up,” he walked out of the tent. Within ten minutes, shouts of “Help! murder, help!” were wafted into the marquee, and groping amid tent ropes, the cause was not far to seek.

On his knees, in an attitude of supplication, was the honourable Fred; standing within a yard of him was a huge white goat. “Oh, go away; don’t take me. Oh, I know he’s come for me at last. Oh, take the devil away, I know it’s him, and I swear I’ll never touch wine again. Help! murder!” Lanterns meanwhile approaching from various directions, the position appeared simple enough. The unhappy man on lurching amid the tent ropes had unfortunately caught his leg in a harmless goat’s tether; in endeavouring to extricate himself he had dragged the inoffensive quadruped close to him, and being at the time in a state (presumedly) unusual for him, the surroundings, grafted on to a strong religious tendency, had distorted a very ordinary billy-goat into the devil specially on his track, and standing over him waiting to waft him to where—no matter how thirsty—drink was absolutely unattainable. Fred Ellis had once won the Grand Military, but that was before—

Luncheon on the Derby and Oaks days in the long-forgotten sixties was an institution that dwarfs the most ambitious displays of hampers

and cold pies consumed on the tops of drags. Conceive a huge marquee with tables the entire length groaning under every delicacy, from plovers' eggs at a shilling a-piece to patés and blanc-manges of the Gunter school of creation. Imagine vats six feet high around the entire walls distilling the best champagne into goblets filled by the most expert of footmen. Conceive all this, free, gratis, and for nothing by simply presenting your card with the name of your regiment inscribed; behold the genial host smiling contentedly, as supporting on his arm a live Duchess of Manchester—now her Grace of Devonshire—he administered to the internal wants of one of the most beautiful women of the day!

Cynics, not contented with accepting the gifts the gods provided, were prone to remark that assuming the feast cost Tod Heatly a thousand, he would gladly have doubled it, if only to enable his fellow-creatures to feast their eyes on that supreme moment of his life when he piloted his fair charge across the crowded course.

Tod Heatly, it may be explained, possessed almost the entire monopoly of supplying champagne to the various messes of the Army. Amassing wealth hand over hand by this profitable connection, he returned the compliment by giving a general invitation to any officer of any regiment who dealt with his firm.

Incredible as it may appear, no instance ever occurred of enterprising chevaliers entering without a right, and the delightful custom only ceased when the usages of society, the abolition of purchase, and our advanced ideas made it absolutely necessary.

A similar experiment in these enlightened days would require admission by parole and countersign and a squad of constables within measurable distance.

Perhaps the most unique individual that has ever risen to a prominent position on the Turf was Captain Machell, whose death occurred not long since.

Joining the 14th Foot some time in the fifties, he exchanged as a captain to the 53rd, and, retiring a few years later, invested his entire fortune—his commission money—in a pitch at Newmarket. It was during his earlier soldiering days that he had the good fortune to be stationed with the depôt of his regiment at Templemore, a desolate bog in the heart of Tipperary, where commanded as clever a judge of a horse—

Colonel Irwin, of the Connaught Rangers—as ever came out of “ould Oireland.” The permanent staff of depôt battalions in those remote days retained their appointments indefinitely, a regulation that enabled them to settle down very cosily, undisturbed by anything more formidable than an annual inspection conducted on the most comfortable lines. Needless to add that Templemore was no exception to the rule.

The drill field adjoining the barracks was converted into a paddock for brood mares and yearlings; the entire stabling and any superfluous out-houses became roomy loose boxes; hens cackled, cocks crowed, and pigs grunted from every point of the compass, and any youngster prepared to purchase a promising hunter—“a bit rough, but likely to shape well”—from the Colonel need perform no more arduous duties than eating his dinner in uniform and chewing a straw all day.

This equine elysium continued till young men began to grizzle and two-year-olds became “aged”; it might, indeed, have continued much longer had it not been for the unfortunate Fenian scare and the military precautions that attended it. Suffice it to say, that in one single day, and without the slightest warning, the Commander-in-Chief—Lord Strathnairn—suddenly appeared in the Square, and within twenty-four hours the happy community was for ever broken up, the farm produce sent off to various auction rooms, and the battalion half-way across the Channel.

Machell, when he arrived at the depôt, was not long in ingratiating himself with the Colonel, and within a year the pair were joint owners of Leonidas, a chestnut gelding that beat everything at all the surrounding meetings at Thurles, Cashel, and Tipperary.

Machell, after his retirement, disappeared below the horizon till summoned to assist at the pulverisation of the unhappy Hastings in the spring of ’67, and it was after that, with £80,000 to his credit, that he loomed into sporting publicity.

A splendid judge of a horse, possessed of a wiry frame, an expressionless face, and a shrewd and calculating temperament, little wonder that he was more or less associated from ’67 to his death with every wealthy horse-owner aspiring to a career and every ass desirous of pilotage by the astutest man of his day.

Machell as a young man had few equals in all feats requiring agility; he could hop, apparently without effort, on to the mantelpiece in the smoking-room at Mackin's Hotel, Dublin; he could out-run most men for any distance between 100 and 1,000 yards, and as a middle-weight could hold his own amongst the best of amateur boxers. It was not until years after, when he came to blows with Bob Hope-Johnstone, at the "Old Ship," Brighton, that the scientific bruiser, hopping round his colossal opponent, caught a chance blow that felled him like an ox, breaking three ribs. "Here, take this carrion away," shouted the Major, and the senseless Machell was removed to his rooms in a cab.

But the redoubtable Bob was, not long after, himself the victim of a cowardly mauling at the hands of two Bond Street Hebrews, who since have developed into the highest authorities on knick-knacks and articles of vertu generally. For even the rugged major, it would appear, had a weak point near his heart, and seeking on one occasion a fair seducer at the Argyll, he traced her to Rose Barton's, and, attacking the two mashers who were entertaining her, was belaboured with champagne bottles by the cowardly Israelites, till, bleeding from a score of gashes, he was removed to the "John o' Groat" in Rupert Street, a hostelry now known as Challis's, after a waiter at Webb's Coffee House who aspired to perpetuate his name.

It is satisfactory to be able to add that in terror of possible consequences, the brothers paid £200 to their victim before he attained convalescence—a circumstance we have probably to thank for their still being amongst us.

Machell, from the exigencies of his profession, was unquestionably the ruin of numerous aspiring punters whose interests clashed with his own. Beaumont Dixie, whose inclinations tended towards always backing "Archer's mounts," was a notable example, and any one who witnessed the scene in the paddock after a race where Machell's horse *did not win*, will not be likely to forget the ruined Baronet wringing his hands in despair, and the irate owner standing over him with "Now, Mr. b — Beaumont Dixie, I'll teach you to back Archer's mounts." It will be said by many that Machell was a popular man, that he was generous, and deserving of every credit for repurchasing an ancestral estate that was supposed to have once belonged to the family; others, however, will contend that he was of a selfish and over-bearing disposition, that his

charity was dispensed when and where it was likely to become known, and that no better or wiser investment than an estate could have been made by a man whose capital must have been enormous, and who hoped, by becoming a landed proprietor, to gain the position seldom attained by a landless man. Probably Machell was never so good a fellow as when he was hopping on and off mantelpieces, and when an accident would have broken his neck and his fortune—the value of his commission—at one blow.

That Machell was born under a lucky star goes without saying, and is proven by his career from the day he sold out with nothing but his commission money to his death, when he died worth a quarter of a million. Popular as a poor man, he every day became more morose as his pile increased, and his first success through the introduction of his brother-in-law, Prime (or his wife), to Lord Calthorpe (for whom he eventually trained), led him by easy stages to Mr. Henry Chaplin, Joe Aylesford, and finally to Harry McCalmont, where all his paths were peace.

His marvellous capacity for "out-touting" the touts with which Newmarket was infested was once exemplified during the trials for the Stewards' Cup at Goodwood. Suddenly dismounting and diving into his pocket he dropped (apparently) by accident a paper which purported to contain the weights at which the favourite and others were being tried. Needless to add, the list had been carefully prepared, and what if true would have been fatal to the favourite's performance was, in fact, a highly satisfactory trial.

Within an hour it was reported at the Victoria Club that the favourite had gone wrong, and 30 and 40 to 1 against him literally went begging. Two hours later a pre-arranged telegram reached his agent, and the money that was piled on by the stable brought a golden harvest at Goodwood.

Doncaster stands out through the long vista of years so prominently with charms that appealed to every taste that a reference to the old Assembly Rooms may be pardonable.

Every one who has rambled through the quaint old streets of Doncaster must have noticed these unpretentious-looking rooms, which, for aught I know, may still echo during the Leger week with the blatant

babble of the cheap excursion sportsman, but which in ’67 were the nightly rendezvous of the various house-parties, and where Major Mahan, who did most of James Merry’s commissions, was the recognised master of ceremonies.

In the smaller room on the left as one entered, hazard, fast and furious, raged pretty well through the night under the auspices of Atkins, a lank, white-bearded man, who had an unofficial monopoly at Goodwood and other meetings which no rival dared to dispute. During the Sussex week he rented a large house near where the Brighton Aquarium now stands, and the best of everything was provided gratis.

Old Mahan, who in his youth had been a well-known duellist, had at this period simmered down to a fiery punter with a shiny forehead that extended to the nape of his neck, and a grizzly fringe in the vicinity of his ears. Superstitious to a degree, if the dice went against him he would seize any youngster entering the room whose physiognomy looked “lucky,” and forcing him into a chair would insist on his calling the main, and then backing him blindly. “Aren’t yer surproised at me losing so incessantly?” he once inquired of Sir Robert Peel, who happened to be standing at his elbow.

“Not in the least,” was the caustic answer; “but we all wonder where you get the money to play with.”

Not that sharpers did not occasionally wriggle in, who, after the soberer players had left, resorted to reckless measures to rook the more adventurous spirits, who in the small hours were more or less tipsy.

An Irish peer (still living) suspecting on one occasion that the dice were loaded—as no doubt they were, having been changed—and just sober enough to pocket them and leave the room, was surprised next morning after having them broken, to find that they were perfectly genuine, and thereupon paid his losses, which were considerable. It transpired later that the sharpers, who were staying at the same lodgings (hotels were not patronised in those days), had entered his room whilst he was sleeping off the night’s debauch and changed the guilty “bones.”

On another occasion a man with large estates in the Riding who had sense enough to know he was too drunk to play, and had been heard to refuse, was considerably astonished next day on the course at being accosted by a gentlemanly stranger, who, producing twenty pounds in

bank notes, thanked him for his courtesy in allowing his debt of overnight to stand over, and despite his protests of having “no recollection of the transaction,” was literally forced to accept the money.

Two hours later, however, another stranger approached him and reminded him of ninety pounds he had won from him overnight, and again R. R. protested he had no “recollection of the transaction,” when a friend passing by chance, the matter was referred to him. He promptly asserted he was in the rooms all the evening, and distinctly remembered R. R. refusing to play; whereupon the sharper, threatening to have satisfaction, walked away, and neither he nor his twenty-pound colleague was seen again.

It was surprising the number of Scotsmen that came in those long-ago days to see the Leger run, and who, night after night foregathered in the Assembly Rooms for no object apparently but to drink “whusky.”

“Come awa, mon, come awa!” I once heard an old Scot insist as he escorted an inebriated countryman out, and from a discussion that ensued after the delinquent had disappeared I gleaned that he was an “elder,” and that “Brother Dalziel was very powerful in prayer.”

CHAPTER IX.
RACING PAR EXCELLENCE.

A VISIT I once paid to Castle Donington had initiated me into many of the mysteries of racing of which I had hitherto been in profound ignorance. I had learnt that heavy plungers often deputed minor satellites to bet according to instructions, and had witnessed "private" trials—which it was well known were being watched—where ruses were resorted to that would have impressed the most sceptical by their realism. I had seen a "favourite" pulled up, and within half a minute a blood-stained pocket-handkerchief hurriedly smuggled into the rider's pocket; I had witnessed a horse backed for thousands go lame without apparent cause a week before a race, and hobble through the village as if on its way to the knacker's, and I marvelled—till I gradually became more enlightened—at the profound acumen of those in authority who could bring such invalids to the post in the best of health and spirits.

I also made the acquaintance of numerous shining lights of the Turf, some that blazed with universally admitted lustre, and some that emitted a shady, indescribable glimmer apt to mislead the wayfarer.

Amongst the former none held a more honourable position, or was a greater favourite, than Mr. George Payne. A man of likes and dislikes, he had apparently taken a fancy to me and often gave me hints that sturdier recipients would have converted into thousands.

Mr. George Payne, although at this period close upon sixty, was the centre of every fashionable gathering that met for racing or card playing; a favourite of the highest in the land, he had come direct from Norfolk to Nice in company with the chief actor in a notorious drama enacted many years later, and no man had raised his voice with greater indignation when, *nolens volens*, he found himself in the very centre of the

unsavoury vortex, “By —, sir! By —, sir!”—an invariable adjunct—“D — scoundrel!” dominating considerably amid the numerous *pourparlers* that ensued.

As a card player his stakes were simply appalling, and it is a well-known fact that on one occasion he won £30,000 from the late Lord Londesborough, who immediately afterwards hurried off to be married. £100 a game was to him a normal stake, and any aspirant attempting to “cut in” at the table who was not prepared to have an extra hundred on the game was “By —, sir’d!” *ad infinitum* for depriving a better man of the seat.

Opinions on that remarkable meteor—Henry Plantagenet Hastings—who first came into public notice at the Newmarket Spring Meeting of ’62, will always differ. By those who knew him intimately he will be remembered as a weak, amiable, and generous youngster, terribly handicapped by a colossal rent roll, a splendid pedigree, a generous, impulsive disposition, and an entire ignorance of the value of money. To the present generation, who have only heard of his escapades, he will appear as a reckless, unprincipled reprobate, preferring low company to that of his equals, incapable of restraining his passions in pursuit of the object of the moment, and sacrificing anything and anybody for their attainment. Barely had he left Oxford than he became the target of that sporting world that pursued him to his grave, and was swindled out of £13,500 for a “screw” that ended his days in a cab; after which he settled down to racing as a serious occupation, and had fifty horses in training; thence (1862) to 1867 he won the Cambridgeshire, the Grand Prix, the Goodwood Cup, and a host of minor races, besides such a colossal sum as close upon £80,000 on Lecturer in the Cesarewitch of ’66.

But although the fates had apparently condoned his infringement of the Tenth Commandment in ’64, Nemesis was even then on his track, and it would seem that the colt foaled about the very time he was exploiting the structural merits of Vere Street was to be the humble instrument in the hands of Providence for the ruin of the wicked Marquis.

It is needless here to repeat the threadbare story that once interested people of how the most beautiful woman of her day stepped out of a brougham one fine morning at the Oxford Street entrance to a linen-

draper's, and emerged from another door in the vicinity of Vere Street with the Marquis's boon companion, Fred Granville. Suffice for our reminiscences, that if all this had not occurred in '64, there would probably have been no "Hermit's year" in '67; that Captain Machell would not have commenced his career by netting £80,000 over the event, and that poor Hastings would never have lost and paid the 103,000 sovereigns he did. One cannot follow the ups and downs of this unhappy sport of Fortune without comparing the cheers that everywhere greeted him up to '67 with the execrations with which he was assailed by the same rabble at Epsom the following year, and all because one of the most generous of golden calves had been tricked and swindled out of a colossal fortune in less than six years, and had met every obligation till plucked of his last feather.

Nor can one forget that the yelpings of his indignant judges (!) were mingled with the hacking cough that carried him to his grave five months later; yet nobody who saw him drive off the course would have imagined that the incident had affected him in the least. "I did not show it, did I?" he remarked to an intimate friend almost from his death-bed; "but it fairly broke my heart," and so Henry Plantagenet Hastings was gathered to his fathers at the early age of twenty-six, and almost before the howls of the mob had ceased to ring in one's ears.

Whilst on the fascinating but occult science of racing, the licence invariably accorded by an indulgent public will not it is hoped be here withheld if one jumps for a moment into the early seventies, an era, alas! as far removed from the present generation as the long-ago sixties. With railway facilities very different from those of to-day, it was the custom of "bloods" to make a week of it at Newmarket during the great meetings, and so it came to pass that a distinctly representative party took up their quarters at the residence of Mr. Postans, the courteous postmaster at Mill Hill, for the Two Thousand festival of '72.

In those long-ago days class distinctions were religiously observed even in such trifles, and whilst the "second chop" resorted to the "White Hart" and other comfortable hostelries, the upper crust engaged houses at fabulous prices, to the advantage of owner and tenant.

The existence was as regular as it was exciting, the racing being followed by an excellent dinner and a stroll about nine to "The Rooms."

It was on the night before the big race that Forbes-Bentley—a lucky dog who owned a number of horses, and who had recently been left a fortune of £140,000 conditional on his adding a second barrel to his name—suggested to a sportsman at dinner that to avoid notice he should put some money on for him on Prince Charlie for the Two Thousand.

Beginning his racing career in a pure love of the sport, he eventually developed into a colossal punter, and discovered—it is feared too late—that the game is not a paying one. "Tommy," he whispered to his next-door neighbour over their cigars, "I want a monkey on Prince Charlie; will you, like a good fellow, put it on for me with as little publicity as possible?"

Prince Charlie during the past twenty-four hours had been a little shaky in the betting, and from being firm at 2 to 1, 5 to 2 was at the moment being laid, and was to be had to any amount.

Entering the Rooms about midnight the air resounded with "5 to 2 against," as, cautiously approaching the then leviathan of the Turf, Tommy inquired: "What price Prince Charlie?" "I'll lay you 1000 to 400, Captain," was the reply, and the bet being duly booked, he continued: "And now you can have 3 monkeys to 1 if you like." "Put it down," replied Tommy, who although exceeding his commission decided that what was good enough for Forbes-Bentley was good enough for him.

But barely had he left the bookie when up came T. V. Morgan, who had a score of horses with Joe Dawson, and inquired what he had been doing.

"Your horse is not going well in the betting, old man. I've just taken 3 monkeys to 1," was the reply.

"My —, there must be something wrong!" he gasped. "I'll go at once to Joe," and without waiting a moment, he disappeared on his midnight mission.

Knocking up Joe Dawson, who had long retired to rest, the two proceeded to the stable, where it was found that the first favourite's near fore leg was inflamed, with every indication of a swelling.

"By —, Morgan!" exclaimed the trainer, "this is d— serious; the horse has been got at, and may be again; we mustn't stir from here for

the remainder of the night." And so the two kept vigil alternately till the saddling bell rang next afternoon. The head stable lad meanwhile and certain helpers were not admitted into the stable, and peremptorily discharged in the morning, and bonnie Prince Charlie won the Two Thousand fairly easily. But during the race there was a critical moment as the horses entered the Dip and his jockey was seen to move in the saddle. "A thousand to a carrot against Prince Charlie!" was now shouted by a hundred stentorian voices, but the shouts were happily short-lived, as the grand old roarer shot out of the crowd and won with apparent ease.

Joe Dawson and his colleague Morgan meanwhile were inundated with congratulations, and when Joe recounted the marvellous escape the good old horse had had, the congratulations were not unaccompanied by fervent hopes that the delinquents might yet be discovered and lynched.

On the authority of the late Joe Dawson it may be accepted that what occurred was of the simplest but most effective nature, and comes briefly to this: "That the fittest horse if gently tapped with a piece of wood on the back sinew will become dead lame, and leave no trace of the nobbling."

But what led to the discovery appears more marvellous. If Forbes-Bentley had not commissioned Tommy to get his money on, and if Morgan had not casually asked what he was doing, the fact of Prince Charlie's unpopularity might never have been brought home to the former; Joe Dawson might have continued in his undisturbed slumber, and Prince Charlie at daylight would have been found to be hopelessly lame.

It was the year in which Aventuriere ran for the Oaks that George Payne told me that he thought she had a chance of winning, and a hint of the kind meaning a lot from such a man as Mr. Payne, I decided to invest £15 in the hopes of landing £500. Meeting my friend after the race, I expressed my fear that the mare had not fulfilled his expectations. "Wait till you've seen her over a long distance," was the encouraging reply. "Don't repeat what I'm saying, but when the weights are out for the Cesarewitch get your money back if she carries anything less than 7st."

Laying this monition to heart, I decided to trust her for a big stake, but waiting, alas! to see how Alec Taylor's lot would be quoted before

acting on the hint, I proceeded to Newmarket with a sporting team.

"Come and dine with me to-night," suggested Fred Gretton, "if you don't mind meeting Swindells; you know what he is, but he's d— amusing."

Swindells was the owner of the first favourite, The Truth gelding, a patched-up old crock that had been pulled at every small meeting for months, and rewarded his enterprising owner by being given a nice light weight for the Cesarewitch.

"I hope you're both on my 'orse for to-morrow," inquired the genial Swindells. And I explained I had determined to back Aventuriere.

"What's she got on?" asked Swindells. "What, 6st. 12lb.? D— me if any — three-year-old has a chance against my 'orse."

It was then that I faltered, and, impressed with the speaker's cuteness, decided to go against my original intention, and backing The Truth gelding, had the mortification next day of seeing Aventuriere win by a neck with little Glover up.

"Well, got home, I hope?" inquired Mr. Payne after the race, and when I told the truth, he added: "Never ask me for a tip again."

It was thus that I lost the biggest chance of my life.

But it was before the above blow had descended that Mr. Swindells was at his best, and during the dinner that we have referred to told story after story which, however creditable to his resourceful genius, would by many be considered "fishy."

"Ah, the Chester Cup was the race for getting money on in those days," remarked the genial Swindells. "I once 'ad a crock called Lymington; ah, a rare useful one, too. At the October Meeting I put 'im in for an over-night race, the stable lad up, with orders to pull him up sharp soon after the start, jump off and wait. The 'orse was dead lame, of course, and for why? The lad 'ad slipped a bit of 'ard stuff into his frog.

"'Bad case; breakdown,' everyone said, so we took 'im back to the stables in a van. First the local vet. saw him, and then a big pot from London, and we humbugged 'em both. Not long after I entered 'im for the Chester Cup, but told everybody my d— fool of a clerk had made a

bloomer of it, as the ’orse could never be trained, and so when the weights came out he was chucked in at nix. My eyes! what a cop! and, my Gawd, didn’t he win! Oh, no; only as far as from ’ere to nowhere!”

At Doncaster, too, the hospitalities were even of a more lavish style, and all the principal owners gave dinner parties nightly to their various friends.

The name of Sir Robert Peel recalls many episodes in the career of that most blustering baronet.

Beginning as an attaché at Berne, the first performance that brought him into prominence was an outburst of temper at a local Kursaal, when, seizing the rake, he belaboured an innocent croupier as the cause of his run of bad luck.

The Foreign Office, deeming change of air desirable, we next hear of him following the noble sport of racing, when I had the distinction of coming within the sphere of his amiable influence. It was in ’69 that I found myself on one occasion travelling to Newmarket in the same compartment as Lord Rosslyn and Sir Robert Peel; in the same train was Lord Rosebery, making his début as an owner of horses, and still unknown to fame as the most brilliant of orators and one of the best Foreign Secretaries England has ever had.

“What kind of fellow is young Rosebery?” inquired Lord Rosslyn; to which the most opinionated of men replied:

“He looks a fool, but I’m told he’s a bigger one than he looks.”

And this was the verdict of a man whose claims to celebrity were based on being the son of a brilliant father, on one who, in addition to a most successful racing career, is universally admired as a sound politician, a genial friend, and the most versatile of living public men.

It was about the same period that the fates again destined me to be within measurable distance of the over-bearing baronet, when young Webb, the jockey, had lost a race through no fault of riding. As he was fuming and abusing the unhappy youth, Mr. George Payne, who was present, protested against the unjust charge, adding that although he had lost considerably by the race, he in no way blamed Webb, who had carried out his instructions implicitly.

It was at this point one of the most amiable of men interfered, and laying his hand on George Payne's arm, said: "My dear George, it will take three or four more crosses to get the cotton out of the Peel family."

Of a commanding presence, and faultlessly attired in heavy satin cravat and large-brimmed hat, Sir Robert gave the impression of patrician down to the heels; it was only—as Sir Joseph Hawley suggested—when the crustation was tampered with that the plating gave indications of alloy. Peel was an inveterate gambler, and an admittedly fine whist player, and even so late as the early eighties might be seen daily at the Turf Club at the 2 and 10 table, and a pony on the rub. It was in this most select of establishments that a fracas occurred between this most irascible of baronets and a noble marquis (still living), when the pot called the kettle black. It ended in both members being suspended, then mutually apologising, and eventually being restored to the privileges of the fold.

A bad loser, he was deficient in one quality that makes a successful gambler, and so remained a failure, despite all the advantages that political interest gave him.

Of a different type was Sir Joseph Hawley; succeeding to a huge fortune before he was out of his teens, he went through the usual finishing school of those days, and served a few months in the 9th Lancers, after which he devoted his attention to yachting and visiting the various Mediterranean ports in the vain search of the pursuit for which nature had intended him.

It was at Corfu, then occupied by a small British garrison, that he had a unique experience. Entering upon one occasion the chief bakery of the island, he sought enlightenment on the process by which the bread was kneaded. Around a vast room, surrounded by a shelf, sat some half-dozen swarthy naked natives, whilst here and there lumps of dough were arranged in piles; on the floor stood two or three youths, whilst suspended from the ceiling dangled various ropes, which the respective squatters clutched firmly in their hands. At a given signal, away they flew, whilst the urchins deftly turned the dough, and then, with a flop, down came the naked natives, with eyes starting out of their heads, only again to fly into space, whilst their next resting-place was being duly adjusted.

No fear of indigestion where such perfect kneading was in force; indeed, the bread of Corfu bore an excellent reputation, and the island was considered one of the most popular of Foreign Stations.

It would be absurd to recount the numerous victories of the “cherry and black” colours, although the unique experience of Blue Gown being disqualified at Doncaster for carrying “over weight” in the Champagne Stakes may come as a surprise to many.

Scotland was represented on the Turf in the sixties by two shining lights of diametrically different types, the patrician Earl of Glasgow and the plebeian James Merry (of Glasgow), and whilst the former, during his fifty years, only once won a classic race—the Two Thousand—the latter swept the boards of everything over and over again.

Lord Glasgow was not a lovable man; bluff to a degree, and sensitive as lyddite, the brine that he imbibed in his youth never appears to have left him, for his lordship was in the Navy when keel hauling was in vogue, and the sixties found him as foul-mouthed, irritable, and cross-grained as any British tar ought to be.

Suffice that in those hard-drinking, hard-swearing days, no head was harder, no répertoire more complete than that of this belted Earl (why belted?), who, with all his faults, was a grand landmark of what a patrician of the old days was, as surrounded by his boon companions, General Peel, George Payne, Lord Derby, and Henry Greville, the magnums of claret flowed in the historical bay-window at White’s. But this was before membership was “invited” by advertisement.

James Merry, on the other hand, was a typical semi-educated Scot, game to the backbone, but not up to the standard then required in a gentleman. He came, indeed, before his time; had he lived to-day, a baronetcy, or certainly the Victorian Order, would have been his reward.

It has been the lot of few men to own such horses as Thormanby, Dundee, Scottish Chief, MacGregor, Sunshine, Doncaster, and Marie Stuart, and despite the fact that no suspicion ever rested on James Merry’s fair name, it is an open secret that when MacGregor was backed for more money than any Derby favourite before or since, the Ring told him, “If he wins we are broke”—and he did not win.

Devout Presbyterian though he was, he succumbed, alas, on one occasion, to French blandishments, and ran a horse on the Sawbath. Summoned by the “Elders” of Falkirk to explain the terrible lapse, he freely admitted his sin, and only obtained absolution by presenting the entire siller to the Kirk.

But no reference—however superficial—to the Turf in the sixties would be complete without one word of homage to the great Englishman who did so much for the honour of old England both in sport and politics. Not that his greatest admirer can place Lord Palmerston in the front rank either as a diplomatist or an owner of racehorses, though none can deny him the marvellous combination of attributes that endeared him to his countrymen, whether in office or opposition, as when crying “hands off” when his prerogative as Prime Minister was being tampered with; or when leaving a debate to come out and shake hands with his trainer; or when at Tattersall’s watching the fluctuations in the betting over his hot favourite, Mainstone, for the Derby; or when twitting his political opponent (Lord Derby), whom he had just replaced as Prime Minister; or, again, whilst watching Tom Spring or John Gully punching in the ring long before any of us were thought of. Ah, there was a man; an Englishman without guile, and of a type well nigh extinct!

Lord Palmerston never attained pre-eminence on the Turf, and when Mainstone—as was suspected—was tampered with before the big race, and when, on a later occasion, Baldwin broke down in his training, he decided to abandon the sport; what more noble than the letter he wrote to Lord Naas giving him his favourite to place at the stud? No auctioneering, no huckstering—but a free gift such as only a great Englishman would have conceived.

And who that frequented the Curragh meetings in the long-ago sixties has not admired the noble form of this same Lord Naas (assassinated in ’72 in the Andaman Islands), accompanied by those stalwart Irishmen, the late Marquises of Conyngham and Drogheda?

England must indeed “wake up”—to quote a phrase as old as the hills—if such records are to be maintained, and seek—perhaps in vain—for other giants such as these mighty dead, if we are to be what we were in sport and politics amongst the nations of the earth.

For like the ripples on a placid lake before some great convulsion of nature, a Cromwell is succeeded by a Charles, and the Palmerstons make way for less sturdy clay, and then the great upheaval comes, which ends in chaos, or the prosperity that is associated with “a great calm.”

Whether these momentous events will occur, simultaneously with the establishment of a Duma, and a great penny daily in Jerusalem, and the abandonment of historical English and Scottish seats for castles on the Rhine, it would require a modern Jeremiah to foretell, but the pendulum is oscillating ominously, with a throb that is not to be mistaken.

Lord Falmouth, whom no earwig ever ventured to associate with a fishy act, holds the proud distinction of never having backed his opinion in his life, if we except the threadbare tale that every biographer sets out as if it were not known to everybody, of how he once bet sixpence, and paid it in a coin surrounded by diamonds.

With this attribute universally known, it is perhaps not difficult to explain the immunity he obtained from innuendo when his horse Kingcraft won the Derby in the memorable year that the Ring “approached” James Merry, despite the fact that he only ran third to MacGregor in the Two Thousand.

That Lord Falmouth was a successful horse-owner may be accepted by the £300,000 he undoubtedly won in stakes during the twenty years of his career; that no one begrudged it him is shown by the unanimous regret of the racing public when he practically retired from the Turf, and that even so “close” a man as Fred Archer, the jockey, should have subscribed towards a presentation silver shield speaks volumes for his popularity.

Lord Falmouth, like his grand old naval ancestor, is now a matter of history, and nothing remains but the two guns outside the family town house in St. James’s Square to remind the passer-by of two great men, who in their respective spheres were *sans peur et sans reproche*.

To Fred Archer, as a phenomenon of a later period, who was latterly Lord Falmouth’s jockey, it is out of the sphere of these annals of the sixties to refer, but seeing him as I often have over his usual breakfast of hot castor-oil, black coffee, and a slice of toast, it seems incredible that he should have lived even to his thirtieth year.

Constantly “wasting” to try and attain 8st. 7lb. his mind and body soon became a wreck, and then the sad end came by his own hand with which we are all familiar.

Bob Hope-Johnstone and his brother David (“Wee Davy”) were two as fine specimens of the genus man as can well be conceived; but like Napoleon—who, according to experts, ought to have died at Waterloo—Bob outlived the glory of his youth, and became a morose, cantankerous wretch, who spent half his time at the hostelry now known as Challis’s, which in the sixties was the resort of every jockey—straight or crooked—that held a licence from the Jockey Club.

Another shining light about this period was Prince Soltykoff, whose wife was one of the handsomest women in England.

It was after her death that he came into prominence as an admirer of beautiful women in general, and of little Graham of the Opera Comique in particular, and—later on—of goodness knows how many more. Many a time have I seen him at Mutton’s at Brighton, loaded with paper bags full of every indigestible delight, which the imperious little woman beside him continued unmercifully to add to.

Lord Glasgow, who was distinguished in the sixties as possessing the longest string of useless yearlings, was, in addition to other peculiarities, the most hot-tempered explosive that epoch produced. Kind of heart in the bluffest of ways, and throwing money about with a lavish hand, I remember on one occasion finding myself on the railway station at Edinburgh as his plethoric lordship was purchasing his ticket. Tendering a £5 note, the clerk requested him to endorse it, which, having been done with a churlish air, his temper rose to fever pitch when the clerk, returning it, said, “I didn’t ask you where you were going; I want your name, man!” A volley of abuse, in which he was a past-master, then followed, and the abashed official realised that what he had mistaken for a grazier was the redoubtable Earl of Glasgow.

The sporting critic of the *Morning Post*, who wrote under the name of “Parvo,” once felt the weight of his indignation for what, after all, was a fair criticism of the great man’s stud, and when, in ’69, an obituary article appeared in the *Post*, the incident and the exact wish his lordship had given expression to were conveyed in flowery symbolism as a hope “that he might live to water his grave, but not with tears.”

The Earl of Aylesford in the sixties was the owner of Packington Hall, and a princely income, and it was whilst I was staying with George Graham (owner of the famous Yardley stud where the great Stirling "stood") that a jovial party drove over from Packington. Luncheon as served in those days was an important item in the programme, and long before the Packington party began to think of returning more than one had succumbed to the rivers of champagne that flowed. Bob Villiers (a brother of the then Earl of Jersey) was one of the first to collapse, and as he disappeared under the table the kindly host's anxiety was curbed by a shout from Joe Aylesford, "Never mind, George, he's only tried himself a bit too high."

A few years later Joe was one of the party, selected in company with Beetroot (as Lord Alfred Paget was affectionately called) and others, to accompany the Prince of Wales to India, and it was during his absence that the troubles that culminated in disaster overtook the popular Earl. "Don't go to India, Joe, if you value your domestic happiness," was the advice of an old friend, but go he did, and then began the intrigues of a titled libertine, which ended in strong drinks and the mortgaging of the ancestral acres.

Amid this genial phalanx no better host was to be found than old Fred Gretton, and it was apropos of the Cambridgeshire that the following incident occurred.

Seated round the festive board were some dozen sportsmen, young men from town and old men from the shires; dear old George Graham (the breeder of Stirling) and his brother; Duffer Bruce (father of the late Marquis of Aylesbury), deafer than usual, but shouting the house down; myself, Peter Wilkinson, and three or four worthies of the farmer class who had come in the wake of Fred Gretton.

"I should like you to win a large stake," whispered to me a jolly old squire who had been my neighbour at dinner.

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," I replied; "the more so as this is positively the last meeting I am ever likely to be at before going to Gibraltar."

"Eh, lad, and why so?" persisted my well-wisher. "I should like you to win a large stake," and realising that it was now or never, I boldly

replied: “Look here, Mr. Bowden, if you can put me on to a good thing I shall be eternally grateful.”

“I suppose you’ve never heard of Playfair?” inquired Mr. Bowden. “He’s Fred’s horse, and he’s certain to win the Cambridgeshire; he’s only got 6st. 3lb., the acceptances are just out, but, for God’s sake, don’t let Fred know. Now, lad, do as I tell you; I’ve taken a liking to you.”

It must be admitted I had never heard of Playfair—very few had—but acting up to the tenets I had learnt during my two years’ intimacy with the late Hastings, I boldly took 1,000 to 15 within the hour with the leviathan Steele.

“What are you backing?” inquired Mr. Gretton, who that moment came hurriedly up, and on being informed by the bookie, he turned to me and whispered into my ear, “There’s only one man could have told you, and that’s that d— drunken old blackguard Bowden; but not a word, mind you, you keep to that 1,000.” And so the kind old man toddled off. Shortly before the race, at the Bath Hotel, Piccadilly, where he always stayed in Town, he inquired of the two barmaids if they would like a sovereign each on his horse; and whilst the foolish virgin expressed a preference for the coin, the wise virgin elected to be “on,” and after the race received from the genial punter £35—a sum considerably in excess of the price.

Suffice to say, Playfair won the Cambridgeshire for Mr. Gretton in ’72, and it is no exaggeration to add that his taking to racing to the extent he then did suggested the idea—afterwards elaborated—of turning Bass and Co. into a limited liability company.

CHAPTER X.
THE EPIDEMIC OF CARDS.

THE Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, at the time of which I am writing, was as crotchety a specimen of the old school as the Peninsular had ever turned out. Clean shaved, with a Waterloo expression of countenance, Sir George Browne was about the last of Wellington's veterans who held a high command. Despotic and vindictive if thwarted, he had a squabble with the railway companies, and retaliated by vetoing henceforth the transit of troops by rail, and a regiment ordered from Londonderry to Cork did the entire distance by route march. Not that the ordeal was without its advantages, for it enabled British regiments to form their own opinions of Irish hospitality and the numerous good qualities of that much-misunderstood race. Proceeding in detachments of two and three companies, every night found them billeted in the towns or villages through which they passed, and it was no rare occurrence for the landed proprietors to ride out and insist that every officer should stay at the Manor House, and to send supplies of comforts wherewith to regale the men.

Mr. Kavanagh, M.P. for Kilkenny, was a brilliant specimen of a real old Irish gentleman, and though deformed from his birth, could hold his own amongst the best. Without arms, this grand sportsman could ride, drive four horses, and shoot to perfection, and his prowess in Corfu and other distant sporting haunts is remembered to this day.

Riding out to welcome the regiment, no refusal was listened to, and within an hour every officer was comfortably settled at Borris Castle, and the men fared proportionately as well.

But the monotony of these tedious pilgrimages will not bear narration. Suffice it that having landed at Cork we received orders, much

to our delight, to proceed direct to Dublin instead of to dismal Templemore.

The craze for punting that we had experienced in London seemed, indeed, to have crossed the Channel, and when the officers had severally been elected honorary members, it was found that the Hibernian United Service Club was the hotbed of about the highest play they had yet encountered. Nightly, with the precision of a chronometer, ten o'clock found the spacious card room crammed to its uttermost limits, and Irish banknotes, varying from one to ten sovereigns in value, were literally stacked a foot high on either side of the table. All through the night these terrible duels continued, and it was no uncommon thing to leave the room and drive like blazes for morning parade at ten. The garrison in this memorable year was an exceptionally "high-play" one, consisting, amongst others, of the 4th and 11th Hussars, 9th Lancers, the Royal Dragoons, Highlanders, and Rifle Brigade, and during that winter fabulous sums were lost by men incapable of meeting their obligations.

The Committee, meanwhile, were roused to action, and peremptory orders were given that the gas was to be turned off punctually at 2 a.m.; but the extinction of the gas was the signal for the appearance of substitutes, and out of some two hundred pockets wax candles were brought forth, and the game proceeded as vigorously as ever.

Further pressure was now applied, and under pain of expulsion members were ordered to quit the card room at the prescribed hour; but even this did not meet the case, and the punters ascended *en bloc* to the largest bedroom above.

It may be explained that this really delightful club possessed a dozen bedrooms, and on the particular occasion of which we are writing, one was in the occupation of Sir James Jackson, G.C.B., as irritable an old Peninsular veteran as a merciful Providence had spared to the sixties. A cavalry man of the old school, he invariably wore spurs, and no human eye had ever seen him without these useful appendages—a small blue moustache carefully waxed, and a bald head with blue tufts on either side completed the picture of this irritable old warrior who ate his dinner every day in the club, and never spoke to a soul.

Play, meanwhile, was proceeding apace, with calls of "King," "Fifty more wanted this side," "D— it, blaze away," "The pool's made,"

gracefully interspersed, when the door suddenly opened, and an apparition in flowing dressing-gown, nightcap, slippers, and spurs demanded peremptorily that the game should cease. To refuse the colonel-in-chief of the Carabineers would, of course, have been impossible, and as the old warrior retired to his couch the punters left the club.

Ruin, meanwhile, had overtaken many an irreproachable man, and L—, of the Royals, K— of the Rifle Brigade, and a score of others, had no alternative but to send in their papers, and then the Commander-in-Chief came upon the scene, and swore, as only a Waterloo veteran could, that if any officer again transgressed he would send the regiment to the worst station between Hell and Halifax.

But the wave of punting that appeared to have engulfed the land was by no means confined to the Arlington, Raleigh, and Hibernian Clubs, and the "Rag," and later on the Whist Club—known as the "Shirt Shop"—caught the infection, and fabulous sums were wagered on the turn of a card night after night without intermission.

Two-pound points to £10 on the rubber were the staple stakes of even the sober old Whist, and then one was looked upon as depriving a better man of the seat unless prepared to bet an extra hundred. Old fogies, who had never previously risked a shilling, would cautiously creep to the table, and nervously tender half-crowns, till frightened out of their lives by Tony Fawcett, of the 9th Lancers, shouting, "D— it, sir, this isn't a silver hell!" and then, not to be beaten, they would club together and make up the requisite sovereign.

Gus Anson, V.C., M.P., the most popular man of the day, was so impregnated with the epidemic that although at the time piloting an important Bill through Parliament, he had given me a standing order that as soon as a sufficient number were assembled for loo or baccarat, a telegram was to be despatched to him forthwith, and numerous were the messages that found their way to the sacred precincts of the House between ten and twelve at night, addressed to Colonel the Honourable Augustus Anson, V.C., M.P., presumedly from constituents.

Brighton, too, suffered from the epidemic, and during the Sussex fortnight the fever spread to an alarming extent. The London detachments came down *en bloc*, and all the best houses and leading

hotels were filled with roysterers, and high play was the rule from night till morning.

Progress along the King's Road after dusk was a matter of difficulty, and at every lamp-post one was importuned by eager touters, and invitation cards thrust into one's hand to visit this house or that. Every roof sheltered punters of a lower strata anxious to emulate their betters, and the family knick-knacks and the family Bible, left exposed by their worthy owner in his desire to participate in the golden harvest, might have been seen huddled together in a corner, or intermingled with cards, whisky bottles, and tumblers.

In preparation for the nightly orgies that commenced about ten, the bloods inaugurated a delightful system whereby the maximum of fresh air with the minimum of exertion might be obtained prior to the inhaling of the foul currents amid which they proposed to revel for the rest of the night.

To meet the requirements of the case, every wheelchair was bespoken or engaged for the entire week at a considerable advance in price, and a procession, usually headed by George Chetwynd, Billy Milner and Billy Call—to whom the honour of the inception is credited—might nightly be seen wending its way to the end of the pier, selecting the most suitable parts, and generally inconveniencing everybody not of the "inner circle."

The costume *de rigueur* on these progresses was white tie, evening trousers and vest, and silk hat, with the oldest shooting coat in one's wardrobe.

Later in the season some Hebrews of imitative dispositions aspired to emulate the bloods, but although their get-ups were irreproachable, the fraud was detected, and the jackdaws ruthlessly suppressed.

It is painful to remember the numerous edifices that toppled, and the many good men that "went under" in the inevitable crash that ensued, and picturing in one's mind the huge table and the fifteen or twenty players that congregated nightly around the board in the various clubs—winners and losers and lookers-on—a lump rises in one's throat as one remembers how few are left! Carlyon and Augustus Webster, Jauncey, Cootie Hutchinson, Sam Bachelor, Lord Milltown, Crock Vansittart, La Touche, Hastings, De Hoghton, Tom Naghten, Sir George O'Donnel, Dick Clayton, Gus Anson, Freddy Granville, George Lawrence, Jimmy

Jop, Jim Coleman, and a host of others, all good men and true, and all long since swept away into the inevitable dust-bin.

Not to have known Jinks was not in itself a reproach, but not to have known Jonas Hunt in the long-ago sixties was to have admitted that one was without the pale of Society, or certainly that section of it which gambled, raced, and drank all day and all night, if circumstances permitted. A fine horseman of iron nerve and unbounded assurance, he had ridden in the Balaclava charge before he was out of his teens, and on retiring from the service a few years later, developed into one of the best gentleman riders ever seen in England or France.

In a chronic state of impecuniosity—as he insisted on asserting—he never omitted to add that a good knife and fork was always ready at home. Jonas had certainly run through pretty well all he had had, but still he always possessed an income.

Always ready to gamble, and always cheery, Jonas, as may be supposed, was popular with a certain set, and if he had a fault it was a forgetfulness in regard to the settlement of small scores, which by some was attributed to the excitement when he rode in the “six hundred,” and by others to various causes not sufficiently interesting to enumerate. Brave as a lion, he had actually been recommended for the Victoria Cross—in those days less lavishly awarded than now—and as he was quite ready to “go out” on the slightest provocation, timid natures preferred to put up with eccentricities arising out of his forgetfulness rather than risk a daylight meeting at twelve yards rise.

Whilst riding in France his performances were a revelation to his foreign critics, and when on one occasion his bridle broke and he steered his mount to victory with his whip, he received such an ovation at Chantilly as seldom falls to the lot of a perfidious Briton.

On one occasion, Jonas, who had allowed a comparative stranger to leave the table without settling, was met by the indignant creditor a few days later and reminded of his obligation; but Jonas, in no way disconcerted, let the amazed punter understand that such a demand was highly ungentlemanly and insulting, offering as an alternative to retire with him forthwith and fight it out with either pistols or fists.

In the duel between Dillon, a gentleman rider, and the Duc de Grammont-Caderousse, which created such an unjust scandal in the

sixties, Jonas, as might have been expected, was the former's second. Neither man had ever had a rapier in his hand before, and when on the following morning both began slashing and thrusting, and Dillon was run through the heart, a clamour arose as to the butchery of an Englishman by an expert swordsman; all which was bosh. Had de Grammont been anything but the veriest tyro, the regrettable incident could not have occurred.

It was subsequent to the various thrilling incidents we have narrated that Jonas selected Brighton as his headquarters.

Jinks' Club was not located in a palatial mansion, nor did it even present the modest exterior of the local Union Club; as a fact, it was limited in its dimensions, and consisted of two rooms in an unpretentious house in Ship Street.

In the front room was a long table and some two dozen chairs, an iron safe, and a side table, convenient for the support of such light refreshments as sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, and beverages of a popular kind.

The back room was more or less a sealed subject, and supposed to contain club memoranda, Jinks' books, and to be the spot where the "proprietor" carried on the business.

Membership of the club was within the reach of all, and a "quorum" of Jinks and Jonas could on emergency elect a member without general meeting or ballot; but those specially introduced by Jonas were received with marked favour. Nor were there apparently any fixed rules as to meetings, which were left to circumstances, and an urgent three-lined whip on emergency.

The procedure in the latter case may briefly be described as follows: —

If Jonas met a "likely" man—from town—he would tell him that his appearance was the luckiest thing in the world, as that very night a rare round game was "coming off," that baccarat would begin at nine, and that the rendezvous was Jinks' Club. This point being settled, an urgent whip was sent round by the indefatigable Jonas, and by 8.45 a representative company awaited the desirable plunger from town.

Prior to the commencement of the game, Jonas, it must be conceded, was a mass of energy. Attired in evening clothes he would first unlock the mysterious safe, and after the local members had come one by one, presumably to deposit money, and returned with counters conspicuously displayed, he would turn with his most winning smile to the visitor with: "Now, old man, how much do you want to buy; it saves a lot of bother by having counters? You've only to plank your counters after it's over, and get their value; good rule, don't you think? It's what they do at 'le Cercle' at Nice; saves a lot of bother."

Occasionally, during the excitement of the game, strangers had been known to put into the pool brand new crisp notes to save the bother of buying counters; but these were always exchanged for counters by the ever-obliging Jonas. "It's much better to have one sort of settlement, don't you think, old man?" he would add, as stuffing the notes into his pockets he eagerly rushed into the fray.

"By Jove! it's later than I thought," was often a familiar exclamation as daylight appeared over the pier. "How many counters have you got, Jack? Count them, old man, or keep them till morning. You and I are old pals; you know where to come in the morning. Name your own hour; good-night." And the genius was round the corner like a hurricane.

An amusing incident once occurred where Jonas was a big winner, and his debtor Master Fred Granville; Jonas on this occasion was immeasurably chaffed. "You'll never get a bob," he was told right and left.

"Oh, yes I will, he's all right," was the half-hearted reply.

"But he's going away in the morning," added another; "you must look sharp, Jonas." And Jonas intimated he had been promised that a cheque should be sent him in the morning.

Next morning a cab drove rapidly to the Norfolk, and Jonas, jumping out excitedly, said: "Look here, you chaps," and he waved a cheque excitedly.

"Let's have a look at it," asked Ernest Neville. "Why, man, it isn't signed." And Jonas's face lengthened inordinately as he realised the terrible omission.

Shouting for a cab after a hurried glance at a railway guide, he in due time reached the station, and had the satisfaction of seeing the last carriage slowly receding from view.

It was the winter that Garcia—a Spanish miscreant—who had won colossal sums at every hell in Europe, had just been detected in a trick that had long baffled the ingenuity of the world.

The scheme was nothing less than procuring the contract for the supply of cards at the principal gambling resorts of Nice, Monaco, St. Petersburg, Homburg, Paris, and Ostend.

Shiploads of his ware thus found their way into every quarter, and wherever he played he was confronted by his own cards. Knowing their backs as well as their faces, the result was obvious, and it was only after innumerable golden harvests that a clumsy accident brought the fraud to light in a salon in the Champs-Elysées.

The scare thus created had not been lost upon the Riviera, and every precaution that ingenuity could devise was taken to make foul play impossible.

It was during this winter, too, that the culprit, detected cheating at the Raleigh, put an end to his career.

Le Cercle de la Méditerranée is one of those majestic buildings that meets the enormous revenue required for its support by making the pastime of cards an absolute luxury. On the first floor is a spacious saloon, with no better light than that afforded by plate-glass panels communicating with the card room and other chambers; liberally provided with lounges, weary punters resorted to it for repose, and waiters, when not otherwise occupied, hovered near it as within easy call of everywhere. In the adjoining room cards were usually set for possible whist and ecarté, or until every available spot was required for the more exciting claims of chemin de fer.

Biscoe had on more than one occasion rambled through the empty room, and oblivious of the proximity of the servants, had been seen pocketing a pack of cards. This having been duly reported, he was made an especial object of interest to the committee; though, until he essayed to play, it was looked upon as the act of a kleptomaniac.

All this, however, was unknown to the culprit, who, with but one object, one aim in life, laughed at every reverse, and raked in his winnings when Fortune smiled on him. His luck as a whole had been fairly good, and thinking the moment a favourable one, he decided to increase his stakes.

It was now his deal, the "chemin de fer" was with him. "Come, gentlemen, let us plunge," he jokingly remarked, as, producing a pocket-book, he placed it upon the pack. "I call twenty-five thousand francs." (£1,000).

A keen observer might have detected certain ominous glances that passed between the polite Count and the bland Professor, but nothing was said, and amid the silence of the Catacombs, the game proceeded.

Five minutes later Biscoe was raking in £1,000 (in counters).

"Again, gentlemen!" he shouted, as flushed and excited, he had not observed that two or three players had risen, and the remainder, bewildered at so unusual a proceeding, stared at one another in blank astonishment.

"What's up?" inquired Biscoe.

"D—d if I know," was the laconic reply, as an Englishman left the table.

"The Committee, sir," replied the Count, "have decided to count the cards, and on their authority I take possession of those before you."

Meanwhile groups discussed the position and ominous expressions, such as "Il nous faut un agent de police," and "C'est clair que nous avons été volés" were bandied about. A *procès verbal* also took place, presided over by the Duc de Richelieu, and within an hour it was known to every *gamin* in Nice that an English "milor" had descended to the level of a thimble-rigger, that his spurs had been hacked off by the fiat of public opinion, and that henceforth his place would know him no more.

The rest is briefly told. A dozen extra cards were found in the packs that had been correct before play commenced; the counters in Biscoe's possession were *not* redeemed by the club, and the "acceptance" was as far from redemption as ever.

Next morning, as the gardeners were sweeping the grounds, a dead body with a gun-shot wound in the head was found in a shrubbery.

Within a few yards lay the tideless Mediterranean, calm and sparkling as the morning sun played upon its waters; whilst here lay an upturned face, cold and rigid and ghastly white save for a clotted disfigurement on the brow, and the same sun, in all the irony of its grandeur, was lighting up all that was left of blighted hopes, fallen greatness, and a tragedy never to be forgotten. Later on, the mangled remains were buried at the expense of the Municipality.

A week or two later a paragraph appeared in a Dublin paper, and there the matter ended.

This is the usual procedure in these fashionable resorts. If you've lost your last penny you are provided with railway fare and seen off the premises; if you blow out your brains, you're buried out of sight. Decency must be maintained! *Faites vos jeux, messieurs*!

A convenient custom obtained at Le Cercle de la Méditerranée whereby a player temporarily cleaned out was permitted to deposit a pencil on the table to represent a stake, it being understood that he immediately proceeded to the bureau to purchase counters to redeem his symbolical investment. This was known as "au crayon."

It was on one occasion that Bob Villiers, who was usually limited as regards capital, was seen to place his pencil on the table and address the courteous dealer with, "Cent louis au crayon."

"By Gad," whispered George Payne, who stood near me, "Bob Villiers has put up a hundred louis 'au crayon,'" and it was in breathless anxiety, and with an eventual sigh of relief, that we saw him rake up his winnings.

It was some years later, whilst once standing on the steps of the Hôtel des Anglais at Nice, at a time when the one topic of conversation was the terrible scandal that had lately taken place in Le Cercle de la Méditerranée, that George Payne expounded the irrefutable axiom that there were only two offences that might not be indulged in with impunity, and yet how extraordinary it was that men of wealth with every enjoyment capable of gratification should yet founder on one or other of these two unspeakable rocks, and instanced the recent H— affair, where

the brother of a peer and major of a crack regiment had resorted to one of the unpardonable offences. And then he quoted George Russell, who had married a duke's daughter, and Lord de Ros and Lord Arthur Pelham-Clinton, another ducal branch, all of whom, in a species of insanity, had fallen from their high estates.

Many will recall the weird rumours that floated around the Clinton case; how the culprit had died and been duly buried; how weeks later an old gun-room companion had recognised his former ship-mate in a railway compartment, and how subsequent inquiry revealed the fact of a coffin filled with lumber.

And in the H— affair the surroundings were, if possible, more dramatic; how a youngster of the 7th, at Nice at the time, at once wrote the story to a brother officer in order that "the first intimation to 'the Regiment' might not come from the papers;" how the recipient intercepted the commanding officer (Colonel Hale) in the barrack square, and handed him the letter with: "This, sir, I have just received, and I feel it's my duty to show it to you"; how within a week the pen was ruthlessly run through the culprit's name, and the nine days' wonder was forgotten.

That the publicity had been far-reaching, the following from the Paris *Figaro* will show:—

"One had hoped that chevaliers of industry were things of the past, but it is not so; the game goes on as ever, to judge of what occurred last Monday at le Cercle de la Méditerranée—a place where one always imagined one only met persons with whom one's purse would be safe.

"It was last Monday that an amiable personage—whose assumed manners suggested imbecility—carried on a system with cards which has no connection with honesty.

"Ever since yesterday Major H— has been the object of a stringent surveillance, called into existence by the extraordinary fortune of having 'passed' only seventeen times on Sunday last during a game of chemin de fer.

"Suspicion was all the stronger from the cards when counted being found to exceed the proper number by twenty-seven.

"It was under these circumstances that the Major bought the bank at auction last Monday, and lost the first two coups.

“It was evidently sowing to reap, for after the second coup, not having sufficient on the table to pay the winners, and while still holding the cards in his left hand, he drew with his right hand a note case from his pocket under which were a certain number of packed cards.

“He then placed the case and the packed cards on the pack he had already in his left hand, and putting the entire packet before him, deliberately opened his note case, whence protruded several notes that had evidently been exposed with intention.

“At this moment a member who had not lost a single detail of this scene of ‘prestidigitation,’ stood up and said: ‘Gentlemen, I play no longer, and if you take my advice you will do the same!’

“The warning was not in vain.

“It was accepted by all but one player, who placed on the table about sixty Louis.

“The Major H—, in no way disconcerted, again dealt, and turned up nine—a nine of diamonds.

“There was no further room for doubt, and all the players left their seats.

“The game was suspended, the cards were counted; there were twenty-seven too many; and contained five nines of diamonds instead of four.

“Immediately the committee was called together, and the expulsion of Major H— was unanimously decided upon. It was also decided that the Major should be turned out of the room he had occupied in the club for two days.” I approve entirely the decision of the committee, but regret that these Major H—s get off with expulsion, when the proper place would be the *correctionnelle*.

No more liberal player ever existed than George Hay.

On one occasion at a humdrum station in India, where he had started an unpretentious club, a sporting tailor who had lost considerably begged him to continue. “Give me my revenge,” he implored, and for three days and three nights, with periodical adjournments for a tub, this amiable punter continued giving the revenge. But Fate, alas! was against the

little Snipper, and on the third day the score showed a colossal sum against him.

“This can’t go on,” pleaded George. “Why, man, I shall be placed under arrest for absence without leave; besides which, I can’t keep my eyes open.”

“Only one more chance,” whined the tailor.

“Very well,” replied George, “you owe me” (and he named a considerable sum). “I’ll play you one game double or quits.”

The tailor pondered for some moments, and then replied:

“Look here, Captain Hay, I have a wife and four children, and I can’t afford to go ‘sudden death,’ but I’ll play you the best out of three, double or quits.”

Failing to catch the subtlety of this logic, George consented, and the result was again against the tailor.

“Now,” said this noble punter, “I’ve complied with all your requests. Nature won’t permit me to continue, but I’ll tell you what I *will* do,” and ringing the bell, he ordered the waiter to bring in the list of members.

Scanning the names and counting the number, he again addressed the tailor:

“Look here. We have, I see, fifty-four members; but old Crutchley and the Chaplain needn’t count. You shall make every member of the club a black velvet knickerbocker suit with scarlet hose, and a cap, and henceforth we are quits.”

Prudes and strict sticklers for propriety may argue that the man was a gambler, and consequently heartless and good for nothing; but after events proved that although dire calamity overtook him, he was of a noble, generous nature.

Despite the above incident, the Pindee Club played a very strict game, and every member before sitting down carefully adjusted a pair of green spectacles.

CHAPTER XI.
THE COUP DE JARNAC.

THE importance of the following subject—as many a fool has found to his cost—entitles it to a chapter to itself. It's short, but instructive.

Card-sharping—pure and simple—is such a low and contemptible subject that we would not presume to present it to our readers were it not occasionally reduced to a "fine art," and, as such, worthy of notice, like the infallible formula that was in vogue in Europe some years ago, and, for aught we know, may still be practised by the "past-masters" of the fraternity.

One may dismiss with contempt such fumblers as the scion of a ducal house who staked and lost his social position some years ago in a high-class Pall Mall club by what has been described as one of the two unpardonable offences against society; and were it not for the unique way his clumsy attempt was accidentally discovered the story would not bear repetition.

There had been a Court function, and Lord Sydney, the Lord Chamberlain, innocently watching a rubber, was considerably surprised by a card cannoning against his silk stockings and striking him on the calf. Whether the fumbler had selected this course of throwing away a card because he had a bad hand, and so claiming a mis-deal, or was supplied with a relay like an amateur conjurer, suffice that he was detected and henceforth disappeared below the horizon.

Nor will we detail how Prince Sapieha, of the 5th Dragoon Guards, playing écarté with a subaltern of Lancers, at the Raleigh, caught his adversary in the act of passing the king, and so cut short a promising military career, for although Sapieha, in his generosity, promised not to

disclose it, conditionally on the culprit never again presuming to play at the club, the story leaked out, and the inevitable result followed.

Nor will we discuss the questionable taste—considering the company—that permitted publicity to the silly tactics of an impecunious Baronet who, by moving a bone counter, endeavoured to realise a few ill-gotten sovereigns.

But what we propose to do is to place before our readers a formula so capable of expansion, so incapable of detection, that one is staggered at the misplaced ingenuity that discovered the combination.

Nor do we here refer to the public casinos of France and Monte Carlo, where at worst one is playing against about 2½ per cent. above the odds at roulette, and about 1¾ per cent. at *trente et quarante*, but to those accursed private parties in Paris, and possibly nearer home, where the following was in full blast many years ago.

Assuming, then, that we have not all experienced a plucking, the procedure at (say) baccarat may be given.

Conceive a long oblong table; in the centre sits the banker, whilst before him are two or three packs of new cards from which he tears the wrappers, shuffles them, and, placing them on the table, invites a player to cut. What fairer than this? What possibility of sharp practice when every eye is riveted on him, who, dealing one card to the right and one to the left, finally deals to himself?

Now study the following table, and realise that the wrappers have been previously steamed and then re-gummed, and that the cards have been packed in rotation (face upwards) reading from left to right:—

7 0 5 9 0 2 6 0 4 1 3 6 0

8 0 1 2 6 9 0 8 7 0 9 7 0

4 9 0 2 5 0 4 8 0 3 2 0 8

1 1 3 5 5 3 4 0 0 0 6 0 7

(0 represents tens and court cards.)

Cut the cards as often as you please, and the sequence and *consequence* remain unimpaired; before testing this, however, it must be understood that we refer to experienced players who know when to draw

and when to stand, and it will be found that the dealer never loses, but for decency occasionally ties.

"Lightning shuffling," whereby the *artiste* (!) appears to dislocate every card whilst really disturbing none is added to complete the illusion.

Here, then, is a problem worthy of such Solons and "system-mongers" as Messrs. Wells, Rosslyn, and others, who, having found disciples, are invariably in pawn within a week.

There is, however, one system one should invariably follow: avoid play, as a *private* enterprise, however alluring the surroundings, unless you are perfectly confident—and how can one be?—that the gentleman who takes the bank and his familiars have not been educated up to the "Coup de Jarnac."

CHAPTER XII.
THE PUBLIC HANGING OF THE PIRATES.

IN the sixties “hangings” were done in public, and anything of an unusual kind attracted large parties from the West End; this was as recognised a custom as the more modern fashion of making up a party to go to the Boat Race or to share a *coupé* on a long railway journey.

And so it came about that the phenomenal sight of the execution of the seven *Flowery Land* pirates in ’64 created, in morbid circles, a stir rarely equalled before or since. Members of the Raleigh, as may be supposed, mustered in considerable numbers, and days before the fatal morning trusty agents had visited the houses that face Newgate Gaol and secured every window that gave an unobstructed view of the ghastly ceremony.

The prices paid were enormous, varying from twenty to fifty guineas a window, in accordance with the superiority of the perspective from “find to finish.”

The rendezvous was fixed for 10 p.m. on Sunday at the Raleigh, but as it was raining in torrents it was a question with many whether to face the elements, or content themselves with a graphic description in the next day’s papers. But the sight of three or four cabs, a couple of servants, and a plentiful supply of provender decided the question, and the procession started on its dismal journey.

Cursing the elements, the sightseers little knew in what good stead the downpour served them, and with nothing worse than being drenched to the skin the party arrived safely.

A cab-load of young Guardsmen, however, preferring to wait till the storm abated, never got beyond Newgate Lane—where they were politely invited to descend, and, after being stripped to their shirts, were asked where the cabman should drive them to.

The scene on the night preceding a public execution afforded a study of the dark side of nature not to be obtained under any other circumstances.

Here was to be seen the lowest scum of London densely packed together as far as the eye could reach, and estimated by *The Times* at not less than 200,000. Across the entire front of Newgate heavy barricades of stout timber traversed the streets in every direction, erected as a precaution against the pressure of the crowd, but which answered a purpose not wholly anticipated by the authorities.

As the crowd increased, so wholesale highway robberies were of more frequent occurrence; and victims in the hands of some two or three desperate ruffians were as far from help as though divided by a continent from the battalions of police surrounding the scaffold.

The scene that met one's view on pulling up the windows and looking out on the black night and its still blacker accompaniments baffles description. A surging mass, with here and there a flickering torch, rolled and roared before one; above this weird scene arose the voices of men and women shouting, singing, blaspheming, and, as the night advanced and the liquid gained firmer mastery, it seemed as if hell had delivered up its victims. To approach the window was a matter of danger; volleys of mud immediately saluted one, accompanied by more blaspheming and shouts of defiance. It was difficult to believe one was in the centre of a civilised capital that vaunted its religion, and yet meted out justice in such a form.

The first step towards the morning's work was the appearance of workmen about 4 a.m.; this was immediately followed by a rumbling sound, and one realised that the scaffold was being dragged round. A grim, square, box-like apparatus was now distinctly visible, as it slowly backed against the "debtors' door." Lights now flickered about the scaffold—the workmen fixing the cross-beams and uprights. Every stroke of the hammer must have vibrated through the condemned cells, and warned the wakeful occupants that their time was nearly come.

These cells were situated at the corner nearest Holborn, and passed by thousands daily, who little knew how much misery that bleak white wall divided them from. Gradually as the day dawned the scene became more animated, and battalions of police surrounded the scaffold.

Meanwhile, a little unpretending door was gently opened; this was the "debtors' door," and led direct through the kitchen on to the scaffold. The kitchen on these occasions was turned into a temporary mausoleum and draped with tawdry black hangings, which concealed the pots and pans, and produced an effect supposed to be more in keeping with the solemn occasion. From the window opposite everything was visible inside the kitchen and on the scaffold, but to the surging mass in the streets below this bird's-eye view was denied.

Presently an old and decrepit man made his appearance, and cautiously "tested" the drop; but a foolish impulse of curiosity leading him to peep over the drapery, a yell of execration saluted him. This was Calcraft, the hangman, hoary-headed, tottering, and utterly past his usefulness for the work.

The tolling of St. Sepulchre's bell about 7.30 a.m. announced the approach of the hour of execution; meanwhile a steady rain was falling, though without diminishing the ever-increasing crowd. As far as the eye could reach was a sea of human faces. Roofs, windows, church-rails, and empty vans—all were pressed into service, and tightly packed with human beings eager to catch a glimpse of seven fellow-creatures on the last stage of life's journey. The rain by this time had made the drop slippery, and necessitated precautions on behalf of the living if not of those appointed to die, so sand was thrown over a portion, not of the drop (that would have been superfluous), but on the side, the only portion that was not to give way. It was suggestive of the pitfalls used for trapping wild beasts—a few twigs and a handful of earth, with a gaping chasm below. Here, however, all was reversed; there was no need to resort to such a subterfuge to deceive the chief actors who were to expiate their crime with all the publicity that a humane Government could devise. The sand was for the benefit of the "ordinary," the minister of religion, who was to offer dying consolation at 8 a.m., and breakfast at 9.

The procession now appeared, winding its way through the kitchen, and in the centre of the group walked a sickly, cadaverous mob securely pinioned, and literally as white as marble. As they reached the platform a halt was necessary as each was placed one by one immediately under the hanging chains. At the end of these chains were hooks which were eventually attached to the hemp round the neck of each wretch. The concluding ceremonies did not take long, considering how feeble the aged hangman was. A white cap was first placed over every face, then the ankles were strapped together, and finally the fatal noose was put round every neck, and the end attached to the hooks. One fancies one can see Calcraft now laying the "slack" of the rope that was to give the fall lightly on the doomed men's shoulders so as to preclude the possibility of a hitch, and then stepping on tiptoe down the steps and disappearing below. At this moment a hideous *contretemps* occurred, and one poor wretch fell fainting, almost into the arms of the officiating priest.

The reprieve was, however, momentary, and, placed on a chair, the inanimate mass of humanity awaited the supreme moment in merciful ignorance. The silence was now awful. One felt one's heart literally in one's mouth, and found oneself involuntarily saying, "They could be saved yet—yet—yet," and then a thud that vibrated through the street announced that the pirates were launched into eternity. One's eyes were glued to the spot, and, fascinated by the awful sight, not a detail escaped one. Calcraft, meanwhile, apparently not satisfied with his handiwork, seized hold of one poor wretch's feet, and pressing on them for some seconds with all his weight, passed from one to another with hideous composure. Meanwhile, the white caps were getting tighter and tighter, until they looked ready to burst, and a faint blue speck that had almost immediately appeared on the carotid artery gradually became more livid, till it assumed the appearance of a huge black bruise. Death, I should say, must have been instantaneous, for hardly a vibration occurred, and the only movement that was visible was that from the gradually-stretching ropes as the bodies kept slowly swinging round and round. The hanging of the body for an hour constituted part of the sentence, an interval that was not lost upon the multitude below. The drunken again took up their ribald songs, conspicuous amongst which was one that had done duty pretty well through the night, and ended with

"Calcraft, Calcraft, he's the man,"

but the pickpockets and highwaymen reaped the greatest benefit. It can hardly be credited that respectable old City men on their way to business—with watch-chains and scarf-pins in clean white shirt-fronts, and with unmistakable signs of having spent the night in bed—should have had the foolhardiness to venture into such a crowd; but they were there in dozens. They had not long to wait for the reward of their temerity. Gangs of ruffians at once surrounded them, and whilst one held them by each arm, another was rifling their pockets. Watches, chains and scarf-pins passed from hand to hand with the rapidity of an eel; meanwhile their piteous shouts of "Murder!" "Help!" "Police!" were utterly unavailing. The barriers were doing their duty too well, and the hundreds of constables within a few yards were perfectly powerless to get through the living rampart.

Whilst these incidents were going on 9 o'clock was gradually approaching, the hour when the bodies were to be cut down. As the dismal clock of St. Sepulchre's chimed out the hour Calcraft, rubbing his lips, again appeared, and, producing a clasp knife, proceeded to hug the various bodies in rotation with one arm whilst with the other he severed the several ropes. It required two slashes of the feeble old arm to complete this final ceremony, and then the heads fell with a flop on the old man's breast, who staggering under the weight, proceeded to jam them into shells.

And then the "debtors' door" closed till again required for a similar tragedy, the crowd dispersed, and the sightseers sought their beds to dream of the horrors of the past twelve hours.

After the trapeze performance we have just read of, given by the venerable Calcraft to a delighted audience in front of Newgate Gaol, it appears to have dawned upon the "Hanging Committee" of the Home Office that, although much of the solemnity of the "painful" performance would be lost by the removal of the patriarchal beard, counter advantages might be attained by the substitution of a younger man to fill the Crown appointment so popular amongst the masses. A new era was thenceforth inaugurated. Instead of the length of the drop being left to the discretion of the *artiste*, the exact measurement was not only fixed, but the rope itself supplied by the Hanging Committee, after a careful calculation by

dynamics of the height and weight of the principal performer. But the immediate successor of the venerable Calcraft was found wanting in certain material qualifications, and although admittedly an expert operator, had a habit of talking when under the genial influence of stimulants.

An unrehearsed incident, when the head rolled off at a private execution, thus got into the papers, and it became apparent that a combination of expertness and reticence was the desideratum to be sought and found.

It was thus that the hero we are discussing came upon the scene some few years later.

Marwood allowed nothing to interfere with business, and he would as soon have hanged his grandmother—if duly instructed—as the most brutal ruffian that ever passed through his hands. To arrive over-night with a modest carpet-bag and be up betimes the following morning were to him matters of routine; to truss his subject with a kicking strap 6 in. wide and then drop into the procession with a face like a chief mourner's were to him sheer formalities; to give evidence later in the day before an enlightened but inquisitive coroner's jury was to him a matter of courteous obligation; and to step into the street half an hour afterwards with the same bag—but with evidently less hemp in it—all came to him as part of a routine to be henceforth cast from memory till the service of his country again demanded his undivided and best attention.

Any one looking at the retiring little man, dressed in the most funereal of clothes, clutching a pint pot with his long and nervous fingers, would have found it difficult to associate him with anything more formidable than a bagman hawking samples for "the firm," and it was only when a sort of intimacy had been struck up and a certain quantity of swipes had been consumed that, yielding to pressure, the great man launched out upon his unique experiences.

Marwood's invariable resort was the Green Dragon in Fleet Street, and so certain as a malefactor met his doom at eight so certain was the hangman to be found at twelve in the "select" section of the pub. This peculiarity, of course, by degrees got to be known, and so it came to pass that young bloods with a thirst for knowledge resorted thither, and "hanging days" raised the "takings" of the fortunate house in Fleet Street.

Incredible as it may appear, this morbid craving is by no means confined to a few, and large sums used to be paid by reckless young scamps thirty years ago to assist at these ghastly functions. It is an undeniable fact, moreover, that a baronet still alive posed as the hangman's assistant at numerous executions.

But with the reaction that came as regards public hangings, the stringency connected with the private performances made these hobbies impossible, and the present era may take credit for having advanced considerably in this respect on the usages of the long-ago sixties.

Before quitting this dislocating subject, it may interest the student of ancient days to know that where now stands an imposing public-house, next St. Giles's Church, Bloomsbury, was once the Beer House where every cart freighted with living victims from Newgate to Tyburn pulled up for their "last drink." After which, wending their way along Oxford Road (Street), they alighted at Tyburn Tree, now the garden of 1, Connaught Place, opposite the Marble Arch.

Surely no passer-by can walk under the porch of Gilbey's offices in Oxford Street without shuddering at the many sad scenes that ancient portico and that ancient street have witnessed.

It was beneath it that De Quincey nightly waited for poor Anne when both were on the verge of starvation; and it was there that he poured out his lamentations of the stony-hearted stepmother—Oxford Street.

The same miseries exist in the present day, and every night bundles of human rags lie huddled together under its inhospitable shelter; whilst within, the old Pantheon—delight of our childhood when it was a huge bazaar—blazes with electric light as the headquarters of a certain whisky which, advertisements tell us, may be procured of 3,000 agents.

The trial and execution of Müller in '64 for the murder of Mr. Briggs in one of the tunnels on the Brighton Railway, created more universal excitement than anything before or since, except, perhaps, the case of Mrs. Maybrick. On the night before his execution, the German Ambassador was closeted with the Home Secretary at the urgent request of his Government, and petitions innumerable were presented; but the Home Secretary was a firm man, and the culprit was duly hanged next morning in front of Newgate. Personally, I was sceptical of his guilt, and so interested was I that I obtained an order to visit Newgate, and by the

judicious expenditure of a shilling, peeped through the observation hole of the condemned cell; later on I saw him hanged, and it was only on his confession to the Lutheran minister, just before the bolt was drawn, that I admitted the justice of the sentence. But the fair-haired Saxon youth of refined and prepossessing appearance had got on my nerves, and when, a week later, his effigy was advertised as having been added to Tussaud's Wax-works, I determined to again see the youth, whom I had last seen being jerked into eternity.

In those days the exhibition was in the Baker Street Bazaar, and if the premises were not as roomy as the present palatial building, they certainly appeared to me "snugger." The Chamber of Horrors was snugness itself.

It was whilst exploring this dismal chamber that an attendant told me that wax figures were the most improvident creatures in the world; that they ran their toes through their stockings with reckless unconcern, and that two or three people were constantly employed darning and mending the belongings of these weird beings.

As I left the building I pondered over what I had seen and heard, and soon discovered I had not heard the last of Müller yet. This is what I saw, or fancied I saw, in my dreams:

As I entered the Chamber of Horrors a few nights after, Müller—whose pose is of the meekest and most becoming—suddenly shot out his arm, and, pointing at me, exclaimed in a loud and guttural voice: "Seize him, seize him; the man!" Then Rush and Greenacre and a host of others yelled and execrated me, and Mrs. Manning (whose crime was probably the cruellest on record) shrieked like a curlew: "Seize him, seize him!" On this I dropped my umbrella—a weakness that I trust will be deemed pardonable—under the circumstances—and immediately followed it with a terrific flop on the floor; so terrific, indeed, was it that it brought me to my senses, and I awoke in a cold perspiration in Jermyn Street.

CHAPTER XIII.
THE HOSTELRIES OF THE SIXTIES.

LONG'S Hotel, in Bond Street, as it appeared in the sixties, was a species of adjunct to half the clubs in London. Men playing till three or four in the morning in clubs that aspired to being considered "correct" usually adjourned to Long's, and one man having engaged a bedroom, the rest trooped in after him. To such an extent, indeed, was this recognised, that a commodious bedroom on the ground floor was especially set apart for these nocturnal emergencies, and within five minutes of entering the most methodical of night porters produced cards, candles, and the inevitable brandy and sodas. Here play of a very high order frequently took place, and here also drunken rows and card disputes often ensued, unrestrained by the unwritten sanctity of a high-class club. It was here that a well-known baronet—long since dead—had a barging match with a peer still above the horizon, but rarely visible to the naked eye, where, after strong language, blows were exchanged, and a meeting arranged across the Channel, which happily never came off, the belligerents agreeing, after calm reflection, that dirty linen was best washed at home, as their respective laundry baskets were considerably overfreighted as it was and needed no further handicapping in the way of publicity; it was here that a young ass—still living—paid £4,000 for a broken-down ex-Derby horse that would have been dear at £100.

It was here that poor old Jim Stewart—seldom sober, and long since dead—gave a baccarat party to some twenty plungers, where it was agreed that no deal should commence after 6 a.m., at which hour he was the winner of £1,500, and where, yielding to the earnest request of a heavy loser, he consented to extend the time to 6.30, and rose a loser of £5,000; it was here that the fastest and best men in London lounged in and out of the coffee room from breakfast time till well on in the

afternoon, and smoked, drank champagne, talked horsy, and swore loudly.

Not that Long's was not a highly-respectable hotel; on the contrary, the entire upper part was conducted on strictly correct lines, and patronised by the best county people of the day, and the latitude granted to the ground floor must be set down rather as a desire of the management to please all parties, and bow before the inevitable there was no resisting.

An amusing story may here be introduced of Colonel Oakes, of the 12th Lancers, the most irascible of cavalry officers, with a command of language that few, if any, could excel, and who invariably put up at Long's.

Stationed at Aldershot, the Colonel about this time got married, and, anxious to avoid publicity, he decided to bring his bride up to London and, to make matters still less noticeable, to bring his soldier-servant with him.

Things went happily till the faithful attendant, who was an Irishman, knowing the Colonel's impatient nature, and considering the luggage was a long time coming up, put his head over the banisters and shouted: "Will you be plased to bring up the Colonel's and Miss Black's boxes?"

The tableau half an hour later in the Colonel's apartments may reasonably be left to the reader's imagination: the politest of landlords expressing his astonishment, the most irritable of Dragoons cursing his impudence, and the innocent cause of this comedy of errors trembling for the consequences.

Colonel Oakes was admittedly a good soldier, and second only to Valentine Baker as a cavalry leader; popular with both officers and men, he was one of the last of the old swaggering school, a man of likes and dislikes, who, although free and easy and very plain-spoken, was a martinet in other ways.

"R—," he once said to one of his officers (who certainly was not the accepted ideal of a sabreur), after an inspection, "the General asked me if you had come from the infantry," and when the remark failed to elicit the reply he desired, he continued: "D— it, sir, you spoil the look of my regiment. I wish to — you'd exchange!" and when the culprit lost his

temper and said he considered he was insulted, and that he was the son of a baronet, the irresponsible Colonel shouted: “D— it, sir, I’m the son of a shoemaker, and I wish to — you’d leave my regiment!”

On another occasion, strolling into the stables, he overheard two recruits discussing him: “I say, Bill,” remarked one of the warriors, “the Colonel’s a d— rum old buffer.” To which the other acquiescing, the Colonel advanced, and standing before the trembling culprits, began: “Yes, I heard what you said—that I was a d— rum old buffer—and I tell you what it is; if you had drunk as much as I have in the last thirty years you’d be a d— rum old buffer.”

Despite all these circumstances, no smarter regiment existed than the 12th in the long-ago sixties, although it was commanded by a “d— rum old buffer.”

Jack Peyton, who commanded the 7th Dragoon Guards, was another patron of Long’s. Shortly after his second marriage with a wealthy widow, his boon companion, Tom Phillips, of the 18th, asked him, “Is she good-looking, Jack?” “No, by —, Tom,” was the reply, “d— near as ugly as yourself.”

The fashion of dining at restaurants had not taken root in those days, and the feeding resorts were few and good and very far between.

Their numbers, indeed, were to be counted on one’s fingers, and were resorted to either for lunch or supper, and seldom, as now, for the more serious ceremony of dinner.

People dined at their hotels, for the plate-glass abominations that now cumber the ground at every point of vantage had not suggested themselves to undesirable aliens and our own home-grown Israelites.

When the (present) Berkeley Hotel first started the new idea under the auspices of the renowned Soyer, the separate-table system was a nine days’ wonder, and people were impressed when it was currently reported that Lady Blantyre and her most unimaginative of husbands might be seen nightly at the next table to Skittle’s enjoying the creations of that most marvellous of chefs.

It was here that that distinguished siren once rebuked a waiter who had clumsily splashed her with some viand, by: “You infernal lout, if I wasn’t a lady I’d smack your ugly face!” and it was at St. James’s (as it

was then called) she was nightly entertained by her numerous worshippers.

A noble marquis—eventually a duke, and lately deceased—was for years supposed to be her lawful husband, but the devotion of a life-time and subsequent events have since given the lie to this evident *canard*.

"The Guildhall Tavern," "The Albion," and Simpson's long reigned supreme as places where saddles and sirloins, marrow-bones and welsh rabbits were to be obtained in perfection; but all have now disappeared, except in name, nor will the expenditure of fortunes in their resurrection ever bring back the indescribable air of solid comfort that characterised these hostelries of the Sixties.

It was in the last-named house, even then on the wane, that my solitary (active) interest in the drama afforded me numerous occasions of delight.

Off the entrance hall was an unpretentious room, and here every day for weeks a divine being from the Gaiety partook of a hurried lunch in the company of my enraptured self.

Nothing could have been more decorous than the tone that pervaded our frugal meal; nothing so incapable of giving offence to Exeter Hall opposite; the door of our retreat was intentionally kept ajar, yet despite these precautions I was one day informed that the manager declined to let the room for two, but that three would always be welcome.

"The School Board is on the warpath," was my inward comment, and I never entered the place again. The "correct" old hypocrite is long since dead; the scene of these innocent repasts has long since been demolished, and the sweet lady who honoured me with her company has long since had a prefix to her name and become the proud mother of a subaltern in the Guards.

The inauguration of the Civil Service Stores, and the subsequent appearance of the Army and Navy Stores, gave the first fillip to that union between the Army and trade which the abolition of purchase and the changes in public opinion have since developed to such an extent.

Captain MacRae, late director-general in Victoria Street, who in the sixties was a plodding captain of foot, set the fashion by turning his sword into a tape-measure, and having taken the plunge lost no time in

converting a general officer (some say his parent) into a laundry-man. Then followed the rush that saw bonnet shops and costumiers springing up in every fashionable street, and as Kitties and Reillys and Madges looked favourably on the military, the crop of Mantalinis increased and multiplied, and penniless officers became well-to-do men-milliners and accepted authorities on things military amid their new clientèle. And so the last nail was driven into that class distinction that was one of the chief characteristics of the long-ago Sixties.

Whilst on the subject of hostelries, a reference to Lane's will not be amiss. This unique establishment was in St. Alban's Place, and was affected by the rowdier class of youngsters, with a sprinkling of permanent residents in various stages of delirium tremens. Dirty and apparently never swept, the rooms might best be described as cosy. The beds, however, were scrupulously clean, and as the majority of the lodgers spent a considerable portion of their existence between the sheets, apple-pie order reigned in this department, ready for any emergency by night or day.

The ruling spirit was old John, an octogenarian in shiny snuff-coloured tail suit and slippers, who apparently never slumbered nor slept, and whom no human eye had ever seen otherwise attired. Assisted by two youngsters of fifty—Charles and Robert—this extraordinary trio knew the habits and tastes of every one; not that eating was extensively indulged in; and beyond the best of joints for dinner, and bacon and eggs for breakfast, the staple consumption for all day and all night might briefly be described as brandy and soda, rum and milk, whilst the more sedate confined themselves to sherry and bitters before breakfast, and a glass of brandy in their tea. How human nature stood such persistent floodings of the system seems beyond comprehension, yet nothing seemed to occur beyond revellers being periodically chaperoned to bed, and now and then an ominous long box being smuggled upstairs, and one hearing a day or so after that "the Captain" had had his last drink, and had been duly gathered to his fathers.

Even in those long-ago days the brevet rank was frequently assumed by ex-militia ensigns, but not to the same extent nor by such sorry specimens as twirl their moustaches in these more enlightened times and stand on the doorstep of the Criterion.

Whisky at this period was literally an unknown beverage in London —possibly because the supply could never have equalled the demand, or more probably because science had not yet evolved the diabolical concoctions that now do duty for the wine of bonnie Scotland. And so it came to pass that the staple drink at Lane's was brandy and soda. Come in when one chose, there stood battalions of soda with brandy in reserve, and rarely did a wayfarer return at the small hours without calling for a libation from old Peter. Occasionally, after an unusual run, the supply might become exhausted, but no temptation could induce the old janitor to retail what had been reserved on "special order." "What, give you that one? Why, it's the Captain's; every morning at five I takes it to his bedside, and if he's asleep in the smoking-room I gives him a sniff of it, and he follows me to his room like a dog."

Visiting the "Cheshire Cheese" not long since, I was struck by the marvellous change that the advance of civilisation (!!) had effected in that most cosy and unconventional of rooms. The steaks and puddings are still as good as ever, but the rollicking Bohemians, bristling with wit, with churchwardens and brown ale that one met at every table, have long since been replaced by their modern prototypes who sip their beer out of a glass, call for a *serviette* in evidence of a trip to Boulogne, and bolt after depositing a penny on the table. And where are the jolly old waiters in rusty tail-coats, shambling along in their carpet slippers, who never inquired how many "breads" you had had nor what had won the 3.40 race? And the Americans who now invade the place are not an unalloyed blessing, as males and females appear to consider it a *sine quâ non* to flop on to the seat where Doctor Johnson is once supposed to have sat, in order to be able to tell poppa and momma in the old Kentucky home how, if they could not rub shoulders with the mighty living, they had at least rubbed something with the mighty dead. This aspiration is indeed almost a disease with these Transatlantic trotters, and one rich and pronounced snob, despite his wealth, who lives amongst us, is known to pay for reliable information of the movements of European heirs-apparent in order to meet them by accident (!) and perhaps secure some fragment of recognition. The sequel is usually to be found in an inspired paragraph (4d. a word) hinting at possible alliance between the two families, which in its turn is flatly contradicted!

“Blood,” some genius discovered, “is thicker than water”—and the most unobservant must admit that some of it is very thick indeed.

And apropos of Doctor Johnson, what evidence is there that the great lexicographer’s rhinoceros laugh ever vibrated through the “Cheshire Cheese”? Boswell makes no reference to it, and surely such an omission would be impossible in the chronicles of that irrepressible toady—but when all’s said and done, what importance attaches to it so long as the fare maintains its pristine excellence and the American bumpings are restrained within reasonable limits?

When Piccadilly did not consist almost entirely of clubs, public billiard-rooms were patronised by many who would not enter a modern one. Many of these were run on the very best lines, and a regular clientele met every afternoon for sixpenny and half-crown pools.

The best was Phillips’s, at 99, Regent Street, where Edmund Tattersall, Lord St. Vincent, Colonel Dawes, Attenborough, the king of pawnbrokers, and a few members of 14, St. James’s Square Club never missed resorting—wind and weather permitting—from three to seven of an afternoon.

No goat from an alien flock dared hope to browse on that jealously-guarded pasture, and if, as occasionally, one wandered in, he speedily wandered out under the withering glances of old Phillips and his son.

Almost opposite were Smith’s rooms, where pool of a high class (in execution) was indulged in, and any amateur with a local reputation who took a ball soon disabused his mind of any exalted idea of his play.

Dolby’s, near the Marble Arch, had also its regular patrons, and even in the select region of Portman Square such correct old gentlemen as Sir James Hamilton, Mr. Burgoyne, and other residents in the neighbourhood met daily at an unpretentious tobacconist’s in King Street and played pool in a dingy room behind the shop.

But in the clubs of those long-ago days the most cold-blooded inhospitality obtained. If you called upon a friend you had to wait on the door-mat, and the offering of a glass of sherry was attended by the risk of expulsion. Smoking-rooms—if tolerated—were placed in the attics, and a “strangers’ room” was an innovation that only came into existence years after.

For long many clubs held out against the recognition of “strangers,” and only within the last few years have the “Senior” and the more exclusive establishments over-ruled the snarling objections of the few old fossils who use a club from morning to night without adding one cent to its revenue.

It was the privilege of the Army and Navy Club to make the first drastic move in the right direction, and to Louis Napoleon’s frequent visits for luncheon and its attendant cigarette and coffee may be traced the present accepted theory that “clubs were made for man, and not man for clubs.”

The best tobacconists also supplied the need now provided by the ubiquitous club, and Harris’s, Hoare’s, Benson’s, Hudson’s, Carlin’s in Oxford Street and Regent Street, each had their following, where every afternoon such men as Lord William Lennox, Lord Huntingtower, Mr. George Payne, the Marquis of Drogheda, Lord Henry Loftus, and Colonel Fitzgerald might be seen seated on tobacco tubs and cigar chests, smoking big cigars and drinking sherry which flowed from casks around the shop.

This last-named individual was a morose, fire-eating Irishman, whose life had been soured by the seduction of his wife by his own colonel, and later by the ravages of small-pox that had seared his once-handsome face.

The son of a famous duellist of the days of the Regency, it was told how on one occasion on entering the Cocoa Tree a comparative stranger exclaimed: “I smell an Irishman!” To which “Fighting Fitz” replied: “You shall never smell another!” and sliced off his nose on the spot.

CHAPTER XIV.
THE DRAMA—LEGITIMATE AND OTHERWISE.

THE tercentenary of Shakespeare in ’64 suggested an experience that many of us were anxious to participate in. That we were likely to be successful was by no means certain, for numerous meetings, held at the Café de l’Europe, Haymarket—where motions innumerable and brandy *ad libitum* were proposed and carried—had decided that an event so strictly dramatic should not be diluted by outside association, but rather that scene shifters, stage carpenters, actors, everything and everybody strictly “legit.” should have the preference of guzzling and swilling to the memory of the immortal poet. But if our claims were weak, our advocates were strong, and so it came to pass that on the eventful evening we found ourselves awaiting the feast in the banqueting room of the Freemason’s Tavern.

That the thing was to be unique we were not long in discovering, as Ben Webster began grace by “For what we are about to receive may the spirit of Shakespeare hover over us.”

Whether it was Shakespeare’s spirit or the more powerful libations included in the dinner ticket must be left to greater dramatic authorities; suffice that long before the speeches began, practical jokes were in full blast, and eventually developed into a free fight.

It appears that some scene shifters with voracious appetites were sending again and again for a slice more ’am, till wags of a higher grade, who acted as croupiers, worn out and disgusted, piled plates with meats, custards, oranges, and mustard till the blood of every carpenter rose as one man, and dishes began to fly right, centre, and left. Even the waiters joined in the tournament, and one, in the act of placing a plate before me,

yelled out, “Wait till I give this — his grub, and then I’ll let you know.” “Damn it,” whispered one of our party, “this isn’t Shakespearian, surely! For God’s sake let us clear out.” But “clearing out” was by no means so easy, for at that moment two or three repulsive ruffians in leather coats and rabbit-skin caps came upon the scene, whilst one, scowling in strictly melodramatic style, confronted us with “Well, what’s the matter with *you*?” But we managed to slip out without giving the desired explanation, and so ended the tercentenary and the spirit Ben Webster had invoked.

People nowadays would hardly realise that theatregoers in those long-ago days could wade through alleys and side streets by no means safe after dark to visit the (then) Prince of Wales’s in a slum off the Tottenham Court Road. With an excellent company, however, and with houris since translated to the peerage and knightage, the little house was nightly crammed, and white ties by the score blocked the thoroughfare in the vicinity of the modest stage door as resolutely as in later years they besieged the Philharmonic and the Gaiety.

Valentine Baker at the time was running the show, or a material portion of it, and much of the profits of his wife’s soap-boiling industry, it was said, found their way into the coffers of the unpretentious little temple in the slum. A wealthy cabinet maker, also in the vicinity, whose profits permitted the luxury of a four-in-hand, might usually be seen worshipping at the shrine, and a tag-rag and bobtail of less wealthy but aspiring young bloods fought and hustled for one glance, one sign of recognition, from the bevy beyond the footlights.

When Valentine Baker began casting sheep’s eyes at the demure maiden reading the *Family Herald* in a South-Western compartment, he little realised that the price he was paying might have been commuted elsewhere by the judicious expenditure of a five-pound note. Twenty thousand in hard cash, the command of a great regiment, and social annihilation—for what? And when Mr. Justice Brett began his charge to the jury by “a man we looked to to protect our women and children,” there was not an Army man present (and the Croydon Court House was crammed with them) that did not internally vow that henceforth, be it in a first-class or a third-class compartment, be it Piccadilly Circus or the British Museum, woman should be his constant care, and, if necessary, any tadpole that lawfully pertained to her.

The rumour came like a thunderbolt, and in every Army club the whispered communication ran: “Valentine Baker is arrested, by Gad!”

No man at this time had such a universal personality—the colonel of the crackest of all crack regiments; the admittedly best cavalry leader of the day; the patron of the drama, and in intimate touch with the Prince of Wales’s Theatre, then under the management of Marie Wilton, since developed into a pillar of Holy Church—the thing seemed incredible, and curiosity ran high to gaze upon the houri that had been so fatally misread by this experienced veteran.

The crowds that surrounded the Court House made access impossible; to hope for admission was the aspiration of a lunatic, when “Come this way, my lord”—as my companion was recognised—reached our ears, and we found ourselves under an open window, ten feet from the ground, at the back of the court.

“I’ll stand next the wall,” continued our guide, “and you get on my shoulders,” and then an acrobatic performance took place that would have insured an engagement at any music-hall.

The sequel is matter of history.

Years after—in ’94—I met him in Cairo, an altered, broken man, in daily expectation of being appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Army. But Nemesis had not done with him yet—prudery, hypocrisy, blue-stockingism were still rampant, and a telegram from London vetoed the intended appointment.

The official explanation was that a “cashiered man” could not command full-pay British officers with which the Egyptian Army swarmed, whilst the universal opinion was that a brave man was being hounded to his death under the cloak of that charity that flourished in its prime during the days of the Inquisition.

Next year he died in Egypt—broken in health and broken in heart—and those that knew his brilliant attainments, and the heights they would assuredly have led to, agreed that—like Napoleon—he should have died years before at the head of his men.

The Strand Theatre also was a highly popular resort, run exclusively by the Swanborough family and their numerous sisters, cousins, and aunts.

To “The Old Lady,” rightly or wrongly, was attributed every *malaprop* that ingenious wits invented, and in later years, when the Doré Gallery and the Criterion Restaurant simultaneously came into existence, she was reputed to have expressed intense admiration of the Doré masterpiece, “Christ leaving the Criterium.”

A pothouse—pure and simple—across the Strand was a favourite after-theatre resort of this (then) brightest of companies, and in a specially reserved room might nightly be seen sweet Nelly Bromley, young as ever, despite her youthful brood of dukes and duchesses and his Grace of Beaufort; Eleanor Bufton, Fanny Josephs, Fanny Hughes, and a host of others, all charming, clever, and young, and, alas! all passed away.

The proprietor of this unpretentious hostelry was a pimply, fly-blown individual, who before you had been five minutes in his company told you that *he* was the rightful Duke of Norfolk, who by some legal jugglery had been choused out of his birthright; he, too, has long been swept away, and so the present peer remains unmolested in his title.

Passing through the Strand not long since, I was attracted by the new Tube station, and entering its portals for “auld lang syne” I was distressed, but not surprised, to find nothing of the happy hum that once characterised the transformed spot. For here stood the little Strand Theatre of the sixties in all the glory of its original popularity before it was improved (?) and modernised, only to find it had become out of the perspective, and so to be handed over to eternal obliteration.

The old Strand may surely claim to be the root of the theatrical genealogical tree, for from its original stock (company) sprang every sprig that struck root elsewhere to became famous either through theatrical enterprise, matrimonial enterprise, or any of the lucrative channels that commend themselves to commercial talent.

For the phalanx that once worked as a whole, would according to present custom, be split into a dozen “one-part” companies, with the necessary embroidery of Bodega men, motor-cum-masher women, and a sprinkling of earnest artistes by way of cohesion.

A few years later the family grouping that originally characterised the Strand was intruded upon by one H. B. Farnie, whose forte was the adaptation of opera-bouffe. Unquestionably an adept in this particular

line, the man was a libertine of a pronounced character, with the result that the chorus at the Strand and the Opera Comique was the very daintiest conceivable. If a houri yielded to this Blue Beard's blandishments, her advancement was assured, and she was fitted to minor parts; if his overtures fell on deaf ears, nothing was too bad for her, and her lot was not a successful one. Occasionally, as a consequence, the hum-drum routine of a rehearsal was enlivened by such unrehearsed incidents as the appearance of an irate brother, and, on one occasion, an exasperated fishmonger from the Theobald's Road (the combination sounds boisterous), burst in at a critical period of a comic duet and belaboured the unhappy impresario to within an inch of his life.

These cases are, happily, rare at the present day, although, if rumour is correct, a Hebrew of dramatic tastes, who, a few years ago, developed into theatre owner, and staged his own pieces, could tell of a similar experience which practically led to his abandonment of the active pursuit of the drama.

When the fair Lardy Wilson, whom we last heard of at the Surrey, had risen into prominence by reason of her exalted connection, she joined the old Philharmonic, at Islington, in the zenith of its glory; so privileged indeed had this darling of Alfred become that, appearing in the "green room" on one occasion with an infant swaddled in purple and fine linen, the manager, band conductor, principals—male and female—and the chorus *en bloc*, are said to have bowed down and worshipped, as was only meet and proper and to be expected of a "loyal and dutiful" people.

"Wiry Sal" was also a delightful member of the company, and soon obtained European fame by being able to kick higher, in a graceful, abandoned way, than any exponent of the art before or since.

Pretty little Camille Dubois, who eventually developed into a Stanhope, was also at this delightful house. Her father at the time was conductor at the Opera Comique, and on one occasion having congratulated him on the execution of an excruciating *morceau* that I was aware had emanated from his inspired brain, I expressed a desire to procure a copy.

"Ach, mein Gott!" he replied, "it is a gavotte in F."

Gavottes in F are, happily, rare inspirations!

For although burlesque lent itself to the display of a bevy of beautiful choristers, mashing had not then attained its present barefaced dimensions, and the cab outside and the calf (just) inside were the exception, not the rule, in those jovial days.

But when Ada and Lizzie—as sometimes occurred—were sisters, it often happened that some system was necessary to insure a properly balanced larder, for from a conversation once overheard, two hams had come from the guardsman and the lordling, whereas the smallest forethought would have insured otherwise.

But the belle of the show was one Laura, who, discovered in the purlieus of Islington, developed into the rage of London, and her beautiful face was to be seen on Easter eggs, Egyptian cigarettes, and at the picture shops, as Connie Gilchrist, the Countess of Lonsdale, and other beauties figured at a later day.

Her personality attracted—as may be assumed—all the front rank mashers, and Harry Tyrwhitt, Douglas Gordon, and Jimmy Douglas were nightly imploring D'Albertson and Hitchins to present them to the goddess.

But this fatal beauty led to a row, and the jealous swain who was responsible for the fair Laura's well-being was not long in bringing matters to an issue.

It was on Ash Wednesday, when our national hypocrisy—since taken other shapes—closed the theatres, with the exception of the Alhambra, that the fair chorister decided to "visit her parents." Nothing loth to encourage such filial piety, her inamorato put her into a cab, and then—with an eye to business—judiciously followed.

The sequel was a sad disillusionment, for getting out at the stage door, she proceeded towards the Embankment, and there by easy stages—accompanied by an admirer—the pair proceeded to a private box at the Alhambra.

The rest is briefly told; a thundering knock at the box door, shouts of "Hush!" from all parts of the house, the orchestra stopped, old Jacobi standing in his stirrups, and an ignominious exit for all concerned.

Later the sweet girl went on tour with one of Alec Henderson's companies, and met a bagman she eventually married.

The bagman has since developed into one of the largest shopkeepers in Knightsbridge, and so good came out of evil, and the course "true love" usually runs in marrying an Italian waiter and living on macaroni was diverted, and everything a real "loidy" should have became hers for life.

And the development of the fair creature's life was frequently under my observation. Beginning with a preference for a "steak and a glass of stout," she soon developed into an authority on champagne; instead of worsted gloves—or no gloves—nothing but Dumont's mauve mousquetaires would satisfy her, and so blasée did she become during her nightly visits to Romano's that she could not sum up sufficient energy to remove her sixteen-franc gloves when picking an artichoke. One marvels at the true origin of these phenomena when under observation during the transition state from gutter to Debrett, for although all of us have seen the mothers, no human eye has ever seen the male progenitor of any of these extraordinary beings, who toil not neither do they spin, yet rise to the highest positions, have their babies kissed by the Kaiser, and all by sheer superficial excellence.

Yet another face arises before me, and sweet Grace O—, resisting every blandishment of Jew and Gentile, stands prominently out in the simple attire of a modest maiden, amid the sables and baubles by which she was surrounded. No adorers waited for her, although the bombardment by letter and overture was incessant; smirky acting-managers enlisted against her, reminded her that no stalls were booked by her *clientèle*, parcels at the stage door remained as they were left, and nightly the sweet girl trudged across Waterloo Bridge to her humble abode at Kennington, whilst half a dozen broughams only awaited the chance of flicking her to a *cabinet particulier* at the Café Riche or Kettner's. Often, as she told me at a later period, she entered her hovel tired and hungry with nothing better than a herring and a crust with which to fortify herself for the monotonous routine of next day and every day, the lot then, and now, of many a tender plant in uncongenial soil.

But every created thing has its breaking point—the balloon overflated will eventually burst, and the egg pressed too hard will assuredly break; and sweet Grace, no exception to the unalterable law of Nature, like a lily before the hurricane, bent before the assault that assailed her on every side.

It was like an ironclad charging an outrigger, when men of the Farnie type entered the lists against an honest and attractive chorister, and the sequel of short duration in Ashley Place was told me by the unhappy girl. Gold at this stage was lavished upon her, and a miniature brougham and tiger—intended as a surprise—was scornfully ignored as it waited for her at the Royalty, and was eventually on sale—as unused as on the day it left its builders—in Long Acre. "I can endure this gilded cage so long as no one knows it, but the shame of the brougham! I would rather have dropped than enter it." So spoke the woman, and within a month she walked out of the palatial establishment to revert to her humble life.

It was a perky Jew, enormously rich, with great back-door theatrical influence, that sought to shape this phenomenal disposition into a regard for his uncongenial charms. But manly beauty of such matured and pronounced types, with its Malacca canes and vulgar jewellery—like olives and a love for babies—are acquired tastes, and not the baits to allure the "Graces" of this sordid world, and years after, when chance again threw me across her path, our heroine was the happy wife of a worthy City clerk, and Ashley Place and the Jew and the brougham had long since been forgotten like the incidents of a hideous nightmare.

This is no overdrawn fairy tale, and what existed then exists now, at least in one popular resort, and two sisters with youth, good looks, and stage experience now "resting," could tell how the only accomplishment of which they were deficient was their inability to fill a few stalls—on terms.

In later years the infant phenomenon became the craze, and Topsey, of the Royalty, and Connie, of the music-halls, and a cloud of imitators all bid for recognition. Some—like Esther—had the golden sceptre held out, and "came and sat beside the king," whilst others less fortunate fulfilled their natural destiny and became the wives of the local tobacconist or greengrocer, and many of them would now be shocked if asked the number of yards between the pond and the Hampstead Fever Hospital, or the sensations of dancing to a hurdy-gurdy on the boulevards of Camden Town.

And so history is made, and pedigrees traced to "de" something—who came over with the Conqueror—with here and there a stiffening from a Chicago pork butchery, and it only remains for you and me, my

brother snobs, to pray that whatever trials the Fates may have in store for us, we may not be bereft of our old nobility.

The recent death of the once-popular Chief of the Fire Brigade, Eyre Shaw, recalls many stirring scenes that lit up the West End in the long-ago sixties, when theatres bore a considerable share of the conflagrations that partially or entirely destroyed some of our most notable playhouses.

It was in ’65 that the old Surrey was in flames, to be replaced later on by the present structure, more familiar to the present generation as associated with the début of such popular artistes as Lardy Wilson, Nelly Moon, Val Reece (Lady Meux of the 20th century), Rose Mandeville, and others under the management of Bill Holland, and the distinguished patronage of names too sacred to mention save with bated breath and in reverential tones.

Three years later the Oxford Music Hall was burned down, but those caves of harmony were less pretentious in those days, and so the conflagration, except as a sight, did not provoke much interest. But a blaze that occurred in December, ’67, roused all London, and as a “spectacle” surpassed anything that had ever been depicted on its stage, and put in the shade the Guy Fawkes celebrations of the previous month.

In that memorable year Her Majesty’s Theatre, without any apparent rhyme or reason, burst into flame, and despite herculean efforts was soon a heap of cinders. For the construction, as may be supposed, was wood and old, and those chiefly interested were probably gainers by the drastic accident, except perhaps Mapleson, who was said to have lost £12,000, and Madame Tietjens, £2,000. But Tod Heatly, the ground landlord, could hardly have regretted it, for it opened up possibilities of improving the site which, after many years, culminated in the present establishment, with its profitable addenda of an hotel with its “lardy-da” luncheon and supper rooms.

In those remote days the Metropolitan Board of Works was the controlling authority, and bone counters which emanated from them passed the holders within the cordon on any of these interesting occasions.

Eyre Shaw, too, about this time was appointed chief officer, and being an enthusiastic patron of the Gaiety (then only a precocious infant with every promise of its present development) little wonder that the

bone counters were in considerable evidence amongst the present-day old ladies who then represented the Connies and Dollies and Lizzies of burlesque.

Contemplating the still-smouldering ruins, how complete appeared the obliteration of many notable incidents. Here Mario—approaching seventy—was acclaimed to the echo by a gushing house, after having been hissed off the stage in Paris for mumbling what he once used to sing; here Giulini thrilled the world with the purest tenor ever heard, and died in the madhouse in the zenith of his fame; here later, Moody and Sankey bellowed in solo and in duet, and stopped the traffic by the eager crowds that sought admission (free) to bellow in the chorus; here, too, sweet little Chiomi essayed to make her début in *Lucia* and failed; and here Lord Dudley, Carpenter, Vandeleur-Lee, Goodenough, and a host long since swept into the universal dust-bin, beamed nightly on Tietjens and Fanchelli with expressions supposed to denote familiarity with the text; here under its dismal porticoes sights of distress and starvation—forgotten in slumber—were nightly to be met with, as painful as anything that ever appealed to De Quincey outside the Oxford Street Pantheon, and here old Leader, prince of Bohemians and managing director of the Alhambra in the zenith of its pranky days, had a box office till he dropped from old age; here on one occasion on the son of one of the celebrated Irish Army agents being presented to him, the Royal George patronisingly greeted him with, “Oh, indeed, a son of ‘Borough and Armit,’” and received the explanatory reply: “No, sir, only of Armit;” and on the ghosts of all these departed memories not one stone now stands upon another to bridge, as it were, the present with the glorious past.

In these latter days, a conflagration such as this would, of course, be impossible, as witness the blaze not long since in Holborn. But then that was a *fire proof* construction.

CHAPTER XV.
MOSTLY “OTHERWISE” (continued).

In the long-ago sixties the Artillery Ball at Woolwich was the most select and the most sought after function that the dancing community yearned for, and about the same time Major Goodenough, a popular officer of this distinguished regiment—although close upon eighteen stone—fell desperately in love with Tietjens, herself of large pattern. Rumour, indeed, asserted that the ponderous couple were engaged, and so it came to pass that poor old Goody was nonplussed almost to distraction when his application for a ticket for his fiancée was politely but firmly refused.

“But she’s engaged to me,” the poor old chap pleaded.

“And when she’s Mrs. Goodenough we shall always he delighted to see her,” was the stern, uncompromising reply.

Such exclusiveness—which shows that snobbery was even then approaching with gigantic strides—contrasts amusingly with what was then the composition of many of our “crack” regiments.

Otway Toler—a brother of the Earl of Norbury—was one of the best amateur musicians, and it was through his kindly offices that I became acquainted with Giulini and other leading opera singers in London.

No such voice as that gifted being’s has ever been heard before or since, and it is sad to recollect that whilst yet in the zenith of his fame he was ruthlessly struck down by insanity, and eventually died in a madhouse.

It was during this painful period that his voice is said to have reached a pitch of pathos that far exceeded anything it attained when he thrilled London nightly.

To compare it with any tenor that may suggest itself to the reader would be as absurd as comparing an English concertina to the most glorious notes of the most fluty instrument, and yet this divine voice was silenced without apparent cause, and the world—the operatic world—will never hear its like again.

As an old lady in tears was once overheard to say to her unmusical spouse at the opera: “It is the voice of a god, and not of a man,” to which her phlegmatic better-half replied: “Bosh, you should hear Sims Reeves; he can go an octave higher.”

Sims Reeves, indeed! But no matter—may they both rest in peace.

To go to an unpretentious Italian eating-house in Old Compton Street, Soho, that has long disappeared, was as good as attending the opera—if one was in the magic circle. Here all day, and every day, congregated the leading exponents, male and female, of Italian opera. At a piano on the first floor finishing touches were given to morceaux, duets were tried over, and, in addition to the vocalists, soloists of the highest order “ran through” special passages of their scores, while below, viands of the strictest Italian type were being consumed from morning to night.

Here osso-buco, and minestrone, and spaghetti were to be found as undiluted as at Savini’s in Milan, and washed down with such productions of the vine as Chianti, Lacrima Christi, and Capri.

No abominations in imitation of French cookery were to be found here. No half-crown dinners of half-a-dozen courses, with their deadly accompaniments of artichokes fried in tallow (*au Cardinal*) would have been permitted here; no New Zealand mutton garnished with turnip-tops (*ris dé veau garni aux truffes*) could have showed its unhallowed head in those sacred precincts and lived, for no mashers of the present-day type existed, and shop boys and shop girls knew their places too well to venture into such reserved pastures, even with the prospect of eating a veritable dinner as served on the Continong.

One cannot leave the subject of music without a reference to the promenade concerts that came into being about this period at the Queen’s in Long Acre.

It was here that the first public exhibition of the telephone was given, and when a series of grunts had vibrated through the hall and a bald-

headed old patriarch had told us that the sound actually came from Westminster, the surprise and delight of the enraptured audience was intense, and we marvelled where such discoveries would end.

And the fun and the frolic at these gatherings was beyond description, often more delectable than correct, but nevertheless delightful and invigorating. The orchestra, moreover, was superb, and the vocalists the best that money could provide, and all these delights were presided over by one Rivière, a pushing musical instrument-maker in Leicester Square, who by sheer impudence had forced himself into prominence before an ignorant public whilst all the time incapable of reading the most ordinary score at sight.

So far as execution and diabolical contortions were concerned he was immense, and as big an impostor as Jullien himself.

When Offenbach was all the rage, and Schneider (under Lord C.'s wing) was his principal exponent, I had the honour of being one of a privileged half-dozen who did homage to the Diva at a dinner party in a private room at Limmer's. Although in the zenith of her fame, her personal charms at the time were unquestionably on the wane, and I can recollect her comments on popularity and what it was worth as she told us how ten years previously, when young and beautiful, she had appeared in London only to be ignored, and that now everybody was at her feet. And then she shrugged her shoulders with an indescribable fascination peculiarly her own, and complacently puffed away at her cigarette.

It may have been a few years later that Major Carpenter, a wealthy amateur musician, introduced to the operatic world a charming English girl, who, under cover of the Italian name of Chiomi, was to electrify London with her singing.

The opera the fair débutante selected was probably the most formidable a nervous subject could have chosen; and so one night every one attended at Her Majesty's to hear *Lucia* expounded. Everything went well up to the mad scene, when, unaccompanied by orchestra, the unhappy heroine has to sing and toss straws about amid a series of impossible runs and shakes. With the straw tossing no fault could be found, but the voice that should have been moving us all to tears was a series of gurgles that eventually subsided into silence.

Sir Michael Costa meanwhile sat grim and immovable, when a few bars would probably have nerved up the fluttering victim, but *that* to that orthodox Italian would have been "trifling with the text," and so no aid was forthcoming, and the trumpet blasts that had emanated from Ashley Place ended in a fiasco, and sweet little Chiomi was heard of no more.

That the drama is occasionally unjustly disparaged is nothing new; that it occasionally produces indirect beneficial effects and even prolongs life may be gleaned from the example of a deceased colonel of the Bays, who, returning from India in the sixties with a life not worth six months' purchase, married a lady connected with the Canterbury Music Hall, and, after increasing the music-hall population, literally died of senile decay within the last year or two.

It was my privilege, on one occasion, in the company of Otway Toler, who knew all the stars, to visit the great tenor Mario and his wife, the equally celebrated Grisi, who had a house during the opera season in the vicinity of Cavendish Square. Grisi, it may be explained, at the time of her marriage, was the proud mother of two children who, by one of those extraordinary freaks of nature one occasionally meets with, resembled in a remarkable degree the family that followed.

"These," pointing to one group, was Grisi's usual introduction, "are the *Marionettes*, and these"—indicating the others—"are the *Grisettes*."

Incredible as it may appear, one of the purest tenors the world has ever produced did not know one note of music, and everything had to be drummed into him by a fiddle. It was at the house at Eaton Place of one of the leading ladies of society that one often met the great tenor, where music alternated with the cotillon and other delights of one's youth.

About this time the Alhambra, which for some years had been waning in public estimation, obtained a new lease of popularity under the broad-minded direction of one Leader.

This worthy man, to use the familiar expression, "grasped the situation," and with the able co-operation of his co-directors—Nagle, head of a celebrated firm of bill-stickers; Willing, an enlightened philanthropist and patron of the drama; Captain Fryer (who was accorded that title because he had a second cousin in the Dragoons)—inaugurated an enlightened policy that seemed to provide "a want long felt," and met the requirements of their numerous patrons (*vide* daily papers, etc.).

The directors' box was a huge omnibus capable of holding goodness knows how many, and consisted of partitions innumerable that had been dealt with by the carpenters; a convenient door led to the stage, and to the managing-director's room—the objective of all visitors—as was only to be expected in a well-conducted theatre. Here were to be met nightly Alfred Paget, a septuagenarian lord, who, when not in attendance at Court, as was supposed, seemed to spend his declining years in wandering from one green room to another. Harmless to a degree, it was pitiable to see the dyed old sinner, chewing a cigar, and indulging in such antics as an occasional double-shuffle with any chorus girl he had selected for his attention.

The Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, too, was in nightly attendance, and never failed to bring some gimcrack which he displayed in the green room with the inquiry: "What nice little girl going to have this?" This, however, was before he had concentrated his affections on pretty Polly Ash, who appearing nightly in white kids up to her elbows gave mortal offence to her fellow-choristers by showing up the cotton "sevens" supplied by the management. Polly, however, was not devoid of common sense, and retired shortly after into a sumptuous flat in Covent Garden and an annuity that survived the donor.

The green room of the old Alhambra was of extensive dimensions, and contained more deal tables than probably any green room before or since. By a magnanimous minute of the directors, ladies of the chorus and ballet had the entrée, and, although none of the plainer members of the company appeared to take advantage of the privilege, every table was fully furnished with champagne (brand doubtful), and giggling artistes and their adorers. Every one smoked like a donkey-engine, and the genial managing director percolated amongst his guests with a kindly inquiry as to how you were getting on. History does not make it quite clear whether any of the fair members were eventually translated to the Upper House; but whether as fortunate in this respect as Mott's and in later years the Gaiety, it was undeniable that no more beautiful bevy of women were to be found than the representatives of the drama at the Alhambra in those long-ago days.

Captain (!!) Fryer as a director was in considerable demand during the orgies, and a youthful ensign on one occasion (when under the fraternising influence of the stock champagne) having invited the

“Captain” to mess, was considerably put about on being informed by the colonel that he was at once to cancel the invitation. With the ingenuity of youth, however, he wriggled out of the difficulty by changing the venu to Limmer’s, and taking him and a select party to Mott’s.

In appearance the Captain gave the idea of having just missed being a gentleman; with a waist abnormally small, and a waistcoat abnormally tight, his shoulders stood out by the aid of whalebone in a manner intended to convey herculean proportions. When he walked it was with the swinging motion attributed by “Ouida” to heroes who crumple pint pots without knowing it, and kick garden rollers about as one would a pebble; he stamped also occasionally with one foot as heavy dragoons once did when they desired to clink their spurs, but which, after all, may only have been a habit contracted by the contemplation of his second cousin who had been in the cavalry.

“Do come here, you provoking Captain,” and “Did you hear what that absurd Captain just said?” and Captain this, and Captain that vibrated through the room to the no small annoyance of the “civilians” present. From all which it will be seen that he was a very fine fellow indeed, and the idol of the ladies of the ballet. But Bobby and some of the youngsters also swore by him to a man; to have the run of the entire back premises, and to be introduced to any siren their fickle fancies desired, was not a privilege to be lightly appraised, and they vowed, till forbidden by the adjutant, that he would be the life and soul of the mess on the next guest night, and that the very rafters would tingle as he recounted his multifarious experiences.

Another theatre that afforded amusement of a different type was the Grecian, and night after night parties of from ten to twenty were made up during the pantomime season to witness the best of pantomimists in his incomparable part. Not that such a privilege was lightly undertaken, for, to begin with, Conquest had to be warned to knock two or three boxes into one, then dinner in the (private) Octagon Room of the “Ship and Turtle” in Leadenhall Street had to be ordered, and then—and then only—the organised party proceeded eastwards in a private omnibus about 5 p.m.

It may seem silly and suggestive of senile decay to descant on such frivolities, but who of the present generation can realise the homely,

sumptuous repast that awaited one at the famous old hostelry of the sixties? The milk-punch specially served by Painter himself, the incomparable turtle soup and turtle steaks, the saddle of mutton one felt it a sin to mutilate, and the honest English pancakes washed down with port—fifty years old—and champagne in magnums were one and all incomparable; and then the start as the omnibus pulled up at the door, and the smoking of cigars of brands now unknown, till one alighted at the portals of the Grecian in the City Road, adjoining the celebrated "Eagle," made famous by the antics of the eccentric weasel that we are assured went "pop" every time it entered its hospitable doors. Can anything of to-day compare with it? But the days of regret for these honest old enjoyments are sadly out of place in these enlightened times, where comic opera has superseded the transformation scene with its adjuncts of clown, pantaloons, and harlequin. The performance and the historian are alike out of perspective.

"Come, Mabel, shall we go to the Covent Garden ball?"

Let us extend our ramble to merry Islington and peep in at the Philharmonic, where now stands the Grand; and although we take a leap into the seventies for the nonce, the "long ago" is sufficiently distant to be beyond the ken of many of our readers.

The rage for Offenbach was at this time at its height, and Soldene and Dolaro drew all the golden calves from the West to gaze on the things of beauty that were provided for their delectation.

A sporting bookmaker—Charley Head—who ran the show, realising that the majority of his patrons were incapable of distinguishing "Hunkey Dorum" from the National Anthem ("The Honeysuckle and the Bee" was, happily, unknown in those days), decided that if the principals were of the highest class, the chorus might fairly be selected for perfection of form rather than perfection of voice, and some seventy of the most beautiful girls in London were engaged to add *éclat* to the performance.

It was currently reported that half their weekly salary of three shillings was paid in counters, to be expended in the salon after the performance; and the roaring trade in champagne that ensued amply repaid the astute manager's calculations.

The drama, run on these lines, naturally produced impresarios of a questionable class, and Leo Egremont, in an expanse of white waistcoat and a stripe down his trousers, was nightly ubiquitous and effusively gushing in his attendance on the golden calves. A ballad singer (at the Cave of Harmony) before he lost his voice—a basso of the deepest dye—he had lately opened a "bureau" and advertised for novelties which he "placed"—as he termed it—as the demand and circumstances suggested.

The streaky nobleman and the toothless lady who could sing three octaves had been presented through his enterprise to an East-end audience, and when the "Phil" opened under such unique auspices, Egremont lost no time in securing a footing.

He also belonged to the "Howlers," a half club, half pot-house, in the vicinity of the Strand.

But the poor old "Phil" has long since been burnt to the ground, Egremont has disappeared below the horizon, and the memories of the seventies are gone to join the mountain of reminiscences of the long-ago Sixties.

Across the river, the Surrey—run on broader lines—was also responsible for the hatching of numerous future hereditary legislators, and during the pantomime season might be found such goddesses as Val Reece, Lardy Wilson, and a score of others, many of whom have since swelled the pages of Debrett and similar works of our religion.

It is no more than the truth to assert that this latter lady—for she had a way with her not strictly histrionic—very nearly upset by her personality a certain Anglo-Russian marriage at a critical period of the negotiations.

The Lamp of Burlesque had not yet been lighted, nor even trimmed, in the future Gaiety—which at the time was a "rub-a-dub" of the lowest class—and so the rumours of duels that filled the air years later between a military attaché and an *off-shoot* of the noble House of Clanricarde still slumbered in the womb of futurity, only to be roused to vitality by the nimble graces of Kate Vaughan and sweet little Nell Farren.

Passing the Charing Cross Hotel one day, an old semi-theatrical warrior returned visibly to my mind, and I could again see Alfred Paget descending the stairs after one of those informal meetings of directors

that occasionally took place in Edward Watkins's rooms. For the would-be juvenile on the high road to senile decay that the present generation may remember was a very different man to the Lord Alfred of the Sixties, or, looking further back, to the handsome young equerry who pranced beside the late Queen's carriage in all the glory of manhood. And then incidents long forgotten were re-enacted in my muddled brain; how as a director of the South-Eastern he claimed, or obtained, or arranged, that all repairs on his steam yacht should be done by the artificers and engineers of the company. And then, by no great effort, the *Santa Maria* appeared lying off Margate Pier, and Old Alfred—as he was gradually becoming—faultlessly attired on "post captain" lines, waiting for his boon companion, Alec Henderson, or possibly a "Poppit," as all his "frivolities" were christened. And then the launch lying at the steps, and the revels on board, and the grateful "poppits" going over the side after being presented with a straw hat or some article of female attire found in the state cabin, belonging to heaven knows who, during the more respectable cruises. And then the trips to Boulogne and the stocking the store-room with cheap wines, which the genial old sinner chuckled would thus evade duty and come in handy at second-chop gatherings. For with all his display his lordship was undoubtedly thrifty, and could have stated blindfolded the exact number of cigars or cigarettes that were lying about, no matter how apparently negligently.

Lord Alfred had been a yachtsman all his life, and he would tell how our late Queen—with that characteristic woman's tact that never left her—wrote to him on the occasion of a former yacht being run down by a Channel mail packet, "You must not be ashamed to accept the enclosed £500 as a gift from the Sovereign to a subject."

"Mighty different woman now," he would add, pouting his lips, and then toddling off with a six-foot telescope to take the harmless bearings of any "poppits" within hail.

His chum "Alec" was a charming man, and when he and Lionel Brough—as on one occasion—began capping one reminiscence by another on the deck of the *Santa Maria* the show was as good as anything to be seen at the Opera Comique or Strand, or any of the various theatres of which he was lessee. Years before he had married Lydia Thompson, a name that conveys nothing to the present generation, but who in the sixties was the cleverest and prettiest of burlesque

actresses, and there was not a youngster worth his salt that was not desperately in love with her. Lydia Thompson was aunt to Violet Cameron, who attained a certain position in the later seventies at the Strand, but was overshadowed by Florence St. John, one of the very few who, in addition to being the most chic of actresses, possessed a pure and cultivated voice.

CHAPTER XVI.
USURERS AND MILLIONAIRES.

WHEN "Purchase" was in full blast the chosen race had some data to go upon as regards the "possibilities" of their clients, who for the most part were Army men, and when the mystic P appeared after a name in the Army List, they felt fairly safe that their investments were recoverable; many, however, found to their cost that "charging" one's commission was not recognised by the Horse Guards, and that despite the production of a sackful of mortgages, Cox dared not part with a cent of the commission money to any one but the actual reprobate. Barely had a name appeared in the *Gazette* when a squad of these harpies hustled each other before the modest portals in Craig's Court, and "the widows of Asher were loud in their wail" when they heard that their co-religionists had been turned empty away. In the citadel itself they, of course, had numerous paid spies, who "posted" them as to any imminent appearance in the *Gazette*, and no one earned more shekels by this illicit traffic than a clerk, who eventually had to leave, but who may still be seen shambling about Leicester Square in the futile endeavour to raise small loans for his shoddy clientèle. In pot-houses that he "uses" he is known as "the Captain," and affects the old dragoon limp. For the human species, as everybody is aware, is composed but of two distinct races: the men who borrow, and the men who lend; under which two original diversities may be reduced all those impertinent classifications we are familiar with, such as Celtic and Gothic origin, white men, black men, red men, and such like. It is of the latter class during the sixties we propose to speak.

At the head of the list was Callisher—known in the family as Julius—then followed Bob Morris ("Jellybelly") and a bad third was Sam Lewis, only then emerging from the status of a traveller in cheap

jewellery, who addressed one as “Sir,” and ready at a moment’s notice to produce a ten-pound note and draw out a bill for £15, with which his pockets were invariably lined.

An undoubtedly leading usurer of the sixties was Bob Morris, who—it was no secret—was originally financed by Sir Henry De Hoghton, an eccentric baronet referred to elsewhere. “Jellybelly,” as he was familiarly known, transacted business in the vicinity of the Raleigh. A noiseless bell in a blaze of brass, and a door that opened without any visible agency, were the first objects that struck one on the threshold of the outer world. Introduced first into an ante-room, a client—subject to satisfactory scrutiny—was filtered into the presence of the great man.

No indecent hurry was permitted during these important preliminaries, and one might as reasonably have hoped to enter the library of a bishop as to approach Bob Morris without a scrupulous regard to decorum.

Numerous applicants were to be found at all hours in meek and becoming attitudes waiting for the moving of the waters, some to be rebuffed by deputy, and others only to be admitted and immediately bowed out.

A second waiting-room above relieved the congestion of the one below when unusual circumstances taxed its resources; it was heavily curtained, dark, on Turkish bath lines, and it was considered a bad sign—as the precursor to a snub—when one was promoted to this retreat.

“Jellybelly” was strictly honourable according to his lights; if he could get 100 per cent. he preferred it to 80, and if 80 was not forthcoming he would accept 60 on the security of the Consols. The variety of his transactions would have embarrassed a less brilliant mind, and at one time or another he had found himself owner (by mortgage) of the three first favourites for the Derby, the foundations and a partially completed wing of a skating-rink, and two miles of a submarine tunnel on which work had been stopped. That such multifarious responsibilities might reasonably be supposed to tax the patience of an ordinary mortal would have been matter of no surprise, but nothing appeared to give him the least concern.

It was Sam Lewis’s pluck that obtained him the colossal fortune he eventually died possessed of, and, ever ready to run the most infernal

risks, it was seldom he did not come out top. During Goodwood week he did business in his bedroom at the "Grand," and a telegram from the other end of the kingdom, followed by an acceptance, invariably produced banknotes by return post.

It was only after he began to feel his legs and to dabble in title deeds, that he abandoned the genial habits of his youth, became *Mr.* Lewis, could be seen only by appointment, and assumed an expression between that of a bank director and an Egyptian sphinx.

When I "met" him first he was not above a swap, and a bill for, say, £50, paid in £20 cash and the balance in tawdry gimcracks, was the usual style of transaction. At the time I refer to he lived in an unpretentious house in Gower Street; later on, as a younger generation are aware, he possessed a mansion in Grosvenor Square; rode in the Park at daylight during the Season, and gave dinner parties where any one from a member of the Victorian Order upwards was always assured of a hearty welcome. So keen, indeed, was the little man (or his wife) to be considered members of the fringe of Society that an enterprising young man—related to the noble House of Somerset—was unquestionably on a fixed scale of remuneration, and given *carte blanche* to bring any sprig of nobility at prices ranging from a guinea upwards. In addition, a few minor under-strappers, such as the late lamented Patty Coleman and others, had a free hand to produce "desirables."

The little man—as we all know—is now a matter of history, his widow not long after again married and then followed him, though her memory is still cherished in the Synagogue as "Lewis of the Guards."

Of the smaller fry, Fitch of Southwark; Sol Beyfus; Finney Davis of Mount Street; Lazarus of Dublin; Cook of Warwick Street, all assisted in spoiling the Egyptians; whilst their sons, almost without exception, have risen in the minor social scale as attorneys or chartered accountants, and their sons will assuredly figure in "Debrett's" or the "Landed Gentry," as instanced in a glaring case, where a railway navvy—who left his three sons a million sterling each in the Sixties—we are now informed in the peerage was undoubtedly descended from de—, who came over with the Conqueror, and that his genealogy is lost in antiquity—not always an unmixed evil.

In the old days the usurer used his own name, now they cull the peerage for the most historical they can find. But

"Brown, Jones, or Moses
Can change their names but not their noses."

Perhaps no more marvellous example of Nature's constant care for the wants of her needy creations is to be found than in the periodical appearance above the horizon of some nobody who, having amassed a colossal fortune, is henceforth ordained by a merciful Providence to rescue impecunious lords from the slough of despair, level-up princes who have exceeded their income, and to put upon their legs livery stablemen; authorities on horseflesh and their superiors generally by birth and education.

In the long-ago Sixties these providential phenomena were not appreciated as much as in these more enlightened days, and, even in such sinks of iniquity as Mott's, an impecunious gentleman was assessed as a considerably more desirable quantity than knighted shop-boys, "H"-less capitalists, or promoted horse copers.

That even then they existed goes without saying; that they did not assist in making history is equally undeniable.

Amongst these one of the most remarkable was one Hirsch—Baron of somewhere—but whose untimely death before he attained to Debrett makes his genealogy difficult to trace with any degree of accuracy. Suddenly springing into prominence, he at once broke out into horseflesh; and although probably not knowing one end of a horse from another, soon collected a magnificent stud, and being surrounded by disinterested! councillors of the highest attainments, soon swept the board in most of the classic races. But the subject that brought him chiefly into prominence was his solicitude for his co-religionists: first, he proposed to buy Jerusalem, but meeting with obstacles that even money could not overcome, he contemplated a "personally-conducted tour," whereby the Holy City should again become the habitation of the chosen race. But his premature death, alas! nipped all these aspirations in the bud, and the gimcrack shops in Bond Street still flourish, and the successors of Callisher, Bob Morris, and Sam Lewis continue to batten on Christian flesh. The sums that he expended and bequeathed on this

desirable object were not without significance, and the leaves of the Talmud were ransacked to show that he was the undoubted 666, or some equally unintelligible hieroglyphic that had been predicted by the Prophets; and then death entered Bath House and snapped the various theories—*Quod erat demonstrandum*.

Baron de Forest, whom we occasionally hear of as one of the shining lights of modern Society, inherited a considerable portion of the deceased "nobleman's" fortune, and is said to be related to him.

A phenomenon of another type was Colonel North. Soldier, philanthropist, and nitrate expert, it matters not what regiment had the privilege of being commanded by him; it was in the latter industry that he endeared himself to his species. Liberal, bluff, and accessible to all, his daily free lunches at the "Woolpack" were partaken of by all the halt and the maim—and occasionally the blind—within the four-mile radius.

Impecunious Irish lords, with ancestral bogs sadly in need of re-digging, now saw their opportunity, and a huge industry sprang into existence, where, for a consideration—in shares—the meteor was introduced to certain higher lords who, holding broad theories on "meum and tuum," in their turn arranged dinner parties where the most exalted were to be met with. Often did the rafters of Connaught Place rattle during these festive gatherings, and sheaves of shares changed hands till no one was sent empty away, and so by the aid of nitrate, "the Colonel" was wafted amid the highest pinnacles of Society. Occasionally a false note was struck when some over-eager recipient put his shares on the market—but even these *faux pas* were soon forgotten, for "the Colonel," if not "Plantagenet blood," had the instincts of a gentleman. That the owner of such vast wealth must needs own racehorses goes without saying, upon which 'bus drivers and unsuccessful authorities on horseflesh came upon the scene, and thus the sphere of Nature's bountiful providence became more extended. North, however, never attained prominence in a pursuit he was probably utterly indifferent to, though his colours were frequently to be seen (last) at the various race meetings.

It was a sad day in Bohemia Minor when "the Colonel" was gathered to his fathers; and the diminution in white waistcoats and immaculate attire in Gracechurch Street and Northumberland Avenue was lamentably

apparent; the rockets that had temporarily fizzled gradually expended themselves, their very sticks were soon untraceable; straw hats and macintoshes (during the dog days) gradually resumed their ascendency, and Society recovered from the topsy-turveydom with which it was once temporarily threatened.

CHAPTER XVII.
SOME CURIOUS FISH OF THE SIXTIES.

SIR Henry De Hoghton, a wealthy baronet who was above the horizon in the Sixties, though possessed of a fine estate and a palatial residence, preferred the hand-to-mouth existence of an hotel, and lived at Meurigy's, now the supper-house yclept the Chatham. Never visible to the naked eye by day, he wandered into the Raleigh about midnight, and casting furtive glances in various directions, would settle down without a word. To punters he was a very oasis in a dry land, for, although the very worst écarté player in Christendom, no stakes were too high for him, and after losing a game or two his proposals were literally appalling.

To ask him to play was the signal for his abrupt departure; to ignore his presence was tantamount to £100 a game within twenty minutes.

Fred Granville, who about this period was considerably out of his depth, had a peculiar experience with him. On one occasion, having lost to the eccentric baronet some £3,000, De Hoghton, who evidently knew that a settlement was precarious, said, "Why don't you go to 'Jellybelly'?"

What occurred at the suggested interview it is difficult to arrive at, but within the week it was generally known that De Hoghton financed the Hebrew money-lender, and by such disinterested advice as above was invariably paid, leaving the onus of recovery to the astute Bob Morris.

Another drunken baronet who lived in Eaton Square, and had married an houri of a very inferior type, had for his chief hobby the surrounding himself with pugilists and comic singers.

Living entirely on the ground floor, the drawing-room, which was carpetless, was got up like a cockpit. Here nightly orgies were held, to

the annoyance of every one within hearing, and when too much port—with which the cellars were filled—had done its duty, rows were not infrequent between this disreputable couple. On one occasion I can recollect her drunken ladyship—very lightly clad—ordering a powdered six-foot flunkey to put out the lights instantly, and her drunken spouse's rejoinder, "If you dare to touch a candle, you leave my house this moment." After which a domestic scrimmage and a stampede ensued, and, seizing hats and coats, the guests hurriedly departed.

An eccentric old lady who died about this time left her large fortune to a distant relative on the condition that she was never to be put below earth.

To obviate the slightest risk of losing the legacy, the astute recipient immediately purchased a house in London, and with all the pomp worthy of the occasion, placed the mass of corruption, securely boxed, on the roof, after which it was soldered on to the leads and encased in a glass shade.

The eyesore has long disappeared, but twenty years ago it was an object of interest to strollers in Kensington Gardens.

Ned Deering was a well-known figure in Pall Mall in the long-ago Sixties. The heir to one of the oldest baronetcies in the kingdom, he distorted his handsome features by wearing his hair down to his shoulders in imitation of Charles I. (of blessed memory), whom he imagined he resembled.

Eccentric to a degree, he married a few years later the lady known to posterity as Mrs. Bernard Beere, and great was the consternation in Kent lest a "small Beer" might eventually be enrolled in their local patrician ranks; but the scare was short-lived, and Ned, who meanwhile had turned Papist—as he would have turned Mohammedan had he lived in Morocco—died in a picturesque cottage with garden in front in Jermyn Street, imbibing buckets of champagne to the last, and with the encouraging assurance of a sure and joyful resurrection. The spot is now represented by the back entrance of the Criterion Theatre. No more amusing companion existed than Ned Deering, when the spirit moved him.

Amongst military characters, Lord Mark Kerr must assuredly be given the palm. Of overwhelming family interest, he ruled the 13th Somersetshire Light Infantry as a veritable despot. Mad as any March

hare, he frequently appeared on parade with his shako reverse-ways on his head, and if his eagle-eye spotted some awkward-looking recruit, he would paralyse him by, “Ha! you come from Bath, eh? I suppose you consider yourself a Bath brick? But I consider you a Bath—” In the mess, too, he was equally harmlessly autocratic, and no officer was expected to take his seat till Lord Mark had said, “Be seated, gentlemen.” But there was no vice in this eccentric branch of the house of Lothian. Whether he would have been tolerated in these later days is another affair.

Major Francis, who was on the Smoking Room Committee of the Turf Club, was an admitted authority on cigars. Small in stature, the little man carried a cigar-case in every pocket of his numerous coats; not a cigar entered the docks but was sampled as a labour of love for the large importers by this unquestionable expert. And often have I accompanied him to St. Mary Axe, where box after box has been opened, and cigar after cigar lighted for our delectation, only to be laid aside after one whiff as we passed on to other brands. “But what becomes of all these wasted samples?” I inquired of Mr. Dodswell. “They’re not wasted,” he replied; “they become ‘Regalia Britannicas,’ such as these,” and he handed me a gilt-edged box of the most approved pattern that might well deceive any but an expert.

Major Francis created a revolution in the cigars that were supplied at the Turf, and instead of the “Golden Eagles” such as Dicky Boulton considered cheap at three shillings apiece, and others assessed as dear at any price, the finest exports of the Havanas were to be had for less than half the money.

Every youngster aspiring to importance in those days affected the possession of countless thousands of two-shilling cigars, and the walls of a large establishment in Bond Street were covered with boxes bearing in conspicuous type the various names and designations.

It may be stated, however, that the venture was a “credit” one, which, whilst pandering to the vanity of the owner, in no way injured the tradesman, who delicately withdrew any surplus stock where settlement appeared doubtful.

Lord Alexander Russell—a brother of the Duke of Bedford—when in command of the Rifle Brigade invariably smoked a short clay when at

the head of his regiment, and Colonel Warden, another eccentric, who commanded the 19th Foot, seldom rose till one or two in the afternoon, and would keep the whole regiment dangling about the orderly room for hours, to the amusement of the rest of the camp.

But this was in the days when every regiment was a principality ruled by a despot, who, twice a year at most, underwent formal inspection by some amiable old gentleman, who received £600 a year for wearing a cocked hat as commander of such and such a regiment.

That the state of preparedness that often then existed would hardly meet the requirements of the present-day alertness may best be exemplified by what I once assisted at.

The Inspecting General was Sir Percy Douglas, who had expressed the desire of seeing and hearing that instructive manœuvre, a *feu de joie*. Proudly did the commanding officer give the requisite command, and with one accord 800 muzzle-loading barrels pointed defiantly heavenwards; then pop here, pop there a hundred yards down the line, a charge here and there exploded.

Every barrel was choked with mutton fat—a favourite recipe against rust amongst the old warriors of England.

Some startling stories of the mad Marquis of Waterford might be introduced, if their production were possible. One or two incidents, however, of the Sixties may not be amiss. Constantly was this privileged lunatic to be seen walking the Haymarket at breakneck speed, and being known to every cabman, waterman, and policeman, his antics attracted little attention. On one occasion he appeared in an exceptionally dishevelled condition, and a constable remonstrating with him in a friendly tone, he produced a large knife, and, hacking off what purported to be a finger, threw it into the street.

His lordship had apparently been exploiting the shambles, and brought away a blade-bone for possible emergency.

On another occasion he had been annoyed by being overcrowded in a railway carriage, and retaliated a few days after by appearing at the station with a chimney-sweep in full canonicals, for whom he purchased a first-class ticket, and whom he took with him into the carriage. His

lordship and his companion were on this occasion in no way incommoded.

Sir Charles Ross, a wealthy Highland baronet, visited London every season for exactly fourteen days, accompanied by a gillie. At the old "Tavistock," where he invariably stayed, his daily meals consisted of mutton chops and steaks; his gillie, by express order, was to be given "anything"—salmon and grouse were good enough for him.

On one occasion he imagined he had dropped a sixpence in the entrance-hall, and half the staff of the hotel were employed for two hours at half-a-crown an hour, with express orders to *find* it.

A substitute was eventually found, and the routine of the establishment resumed its normal condition.

Some years later his eccentricities assumed a more serious form, and having nearly frightened an old woman out of her life by suddenly rising in his birthday suit with his ribs painted black from among furze bushes, he was placed under restraint, and, I believe, died in a madhouse.

Lord Ernest Bruce, who eventually blossomed into Marquis of Ailesbury, had a chronic deafness that apparently descended to his sons —"The Duffer," long since dead, and the present holder of the title (Henry)—and it was better than any play to see the father and two sons narrating anecdotes to one another, with their hands to their respective ears, and bellowing like fog-horns, and then roaring like rhinoceroses as their jokes permeated their skulls over the family gatherings that periodically took place at Boodle's.

At this time an excellent foreign restaurant had made its appearance in a side street of Soho, and many of the foreign attachés gave it their (private) patronage.

A joke that obtained was the scrambling for coppers from the window of a private room, and it was on one occasion when Baron Spaum was revelling in the excitement that the crowds became so dense that an appeal from the landlord necessitated a resort to a ruse.

A suitable (!) person who was dining in the public room kindly consented to don the Baron's light overcoat and to scramble coppers that had been provided as he leisurely left the premises. The deception succeeded admirably, as the crowd followed the supposed benefactor.

The assumption of the Baron's coat was also a profound success, at least so all but the Baron agreed. He never saw his paletot again.

An old member of the Conservative, who was well known during the Sixties and Seventies, made it an invariable practice to sip brown sherry for two or three hours every afternoon. So monotonous were the constant applications to his pocket that he directed the total should be paid in one instalment before he left.

Fifteen and twenty glasses were the old toper's average, but on one occasion when his consumption amounted to twenty-five, he fixed a glazed eye on the footman, and gurgled out: "Ten probable, eighteen possible, but twenty-five, *never*!" After which he paid up, and toddled into the attendant four-wheeler.

It was during the sixties that Mr. Justice Maule was in the zenith of his fame. Devoted to his profession, and to the old port of his Inn, no dinner of his brother benchers would have appeared complete without the adjunct of his beaming countenance, when, having stowed away three bottles under his belt, he would "tack" the few yards to his chambers in Paper Buildings, and hang a man in the morning with the decorum only to be attained by experience.

It was after one of these festive gatherings that Paper Buildings was burnt to the ground. The Judge, it appears, was a great reader; whether he always understood what he read (or did) under given circumstances is not quite clear, suffice that, having popped into bed and adjusted a vase conveniently on a chair, he proceeded to place a moderator lamp under his couch, after which the only reliable evidence obtainable was that the old gentleman woke with a start to find himself enveloped in flames.

As he himself described it, he thought he was dead and that he had *not* been carried to Abraham's bosom. He never, indeed, got over the shock, and, moderating his partiality for old port, he exhibited more serious tendencies, and so good came out of evil, and the occupiers of the present palatial chambers are indebted to Mr. Justice Maule for having gone to bed tipsy and burnt down the crazy old buildings.

Mr. Justice Maule had a grim humour of his own, and Serjeant Ballantine used to tell of how on one occasion during the Guildford Assizes a murder case hinged on the evidence of a child to which the

Crown attached importance, but to which the prisoner vehemently objected.

"Come here, my little girl," said his lordship. "Now, if you were to tell a story do you know where you would go to?"

"No, sir," was the candid reply.

"Neither do I," was the judicial endorsement; "an excellent answer; swear the witness."

But that was before the "shock" that brought him to his senses.

Every Army man in the sixties will remember George Goddard. A cheery Irishman, full of anecdotage, universally popular, but, alas! with the proverbial lack of the one thing needful. Appointed by Tod Heatly as one of his touts, he combined business with pleasure by radiating between the various regiments and billeting himself on any one he knew at the Raleigh or Army Clubs.

"Now, Major," he once said to Gussy Brown after a hilarious mess dinner, "you see that stain on the floor? I bet you I'll remove it without touching it."

"Impossible," replied the little man. "I'll bet a fiver you don't," and before the astonished audience could say "Jack Robinson" the gallant Gussy had been seized by his spurs and smeared across the floor.

But all this was in the days of practical joking.

Gussy Brown, although the most diminutive of cavalry field officers, was also the most pompous, and on one occasion when the 4th were invited to a humdrum dance at Brighton the little man, to show his displeasure, walked slowly round the room with his "Gibus" under his arm, and making three stately bows to the astonished hostess slowly left the room.

On the occasion of the Goddard joke, his only remark was, "D— stupid!"

At this period touting for brewers and wine merchants was the curse of the Army. Every club contained retired colonels and others who buttonholed one on every occasion. Before a troopship entered the harbour a tout came on board with the pilot; dining at an Army club, the man at the next table inquired if your regimental canteen was well

served; indeed, they penetrated the most sacred precincts with the pertinacity of a sandstorm.

As a cranky old general once exclaimed “D— it, I thought we were safe when militia men were not eligible; but these touts and store-keepers and bonnet-shop keepers will make the Rag a den of thieves, by Gad!”

The association of these respective vocations in the old warrior’s mind was evidently based on the legend that then obtained that when the captain was inspecting the front rank of the Tower Hamlets the rear rank was faced about by way of precaution.

Every one who knew Jonas Hunt must have been astonished to read that he left over £35,000 at his death a few months ago. As brave as a lion, he would assuredly—had he not been such a rip—have received the Victoria Cross for his share in the Balaclava charge, and when he sold out two years later, he was literally without a shilling, and continued in the same happy condition for twenty years after—not that Jonas stinted himself in anything, on the contrary, he would plunge to any extent, dunning you if chance made him your creditor, and forgetting any debt almost as soon as contracted. A bruiser of no mean class, he invariably suggested a round if any one had the temerity to remind him.

A highly objectionable individual, whose father was a buggy master in Calcutta, and actually got a commission in the “Blues” till ordered to sell out for writing anonymous letters to a celebrated beauty of the Sixties not long since dead, once had the impudence to remind Jonas of a debt, and was replied to as follows: “I should have thought it more in your line to have written anonymously to my wife, but if you prefer to settle the matter with your fists I am entirely at your disposal.” The man who procured the retirement of the anonymous letter-writer was at the time an officer in the Guards, and though still to be seen radiating between minor restaurants and 100 per cent. bureaus, has nothing left of his former self but a fly-blown prefix to his name, and even that has lost its commercial value amongst Hebrew financiers of shady enterprises.

CHAPTER XVIII.
SPIRITUALISM AND REALISM.

THE craze for "table-turning," "spirit-rapping," and every conceivable trash connected with the occult sciences, was in full blast in the long-ago Sixties, and old ladies would form tea parties and sit all day and half through the night at round tables with their knotty old mittened thumbs pressed convulsively against those of their neighbours waiting for the moving of the waters. Lord Ashburton, who lived near Portman Square, was the arch-priest and arch-culprit that disseminated this fashionable twaddle, and there was not a spinster in that (then) highly-fashionable district that did not devour the leaflets that were periodically issued broadcast by the inspired old humbug. Occasionally invitations were issued for séances, when refreshments (more or less light) were provided to fortify poor human nature against possible unearthly attacks after the lights had been judiciously lowered.

It was at one of these functions that I on one occasion found myself, and, possessing in those days an appetite like a cormorant, was terribly disillusioned after two hours' waiting for the "spirits" to hear his lordship order the butler to "bring in the urn." (In those long-ago days tea without an urn the dimensions of a safe was an absolute impossibility.) Nor did spiritualism end here, for numerous haunted houses were in the market where apparitions and unearthly sounds could be seen and heard and which no one would rent.

It is the experience of a man I knew intimately that I will now—without expressing an opinion—relate, as far as I can recollect, in his own words:

"Looking for a house with plenty of elbow room and of reasonable rent, my attention was attracted by a dilapidated building

—with garden in front and noseless statues liberally besprinkling it —situated in the Marylebone Road. Proceeding to the agent's, I was considerably surprised by his terms. 'The house,' he began, 'has a bad name; no caretaker will live on the premises. In a word, sir, here's the key, and if you are willing to occupy it you shall have it rent free for six months.' I at once closed with his offer, and seeking out a chum—lately ordained—we spent the next night in the haunted house. It was in the dining-room we proposed to make a first night of it, and barely had we settled down for a chat when footsteps were distinctly heard in the hall. 'Our lantern!' I whispered as we excitedly opened the door. Nothing was to be seen, nothing to be heard. 'Hush!' whispered my friend, 'I hear something behind me.' I heard the sound also. 'Who's there?' I called out. 'Who's there?' I repeated; but still the silence of the Catacombs. Then the sound of footsteps ascending the uncarpeted stairs was unmistakable till they gradually died away in the attics. A moment of indescribable stillness followed; a cold blast chilled the very marrow of our bones, and our lantern went out like the crack of a pistol.

"We returned to our armchairs after carefully locking the door, but we heard no more. And so we sat till welcome daylight made its appearance, and as the kettle simmered on the hob and the sound of awakening life made itself manifest in the Marylebone Road, it seemed impossible to realise the weird manifestations we had witnessed.

"'—,' said my friend, 'we have learnt a terrible experience; Satan has been unloosed amongst us. Let us pray.'"

The house has long since been pulled down; majestic flats now occupy the site, and instead of the sepulchral moans of disembodied souls the untrained, throaty voice of lovely woman may be heard shrieking to the accompaniment of a hired piano, and producing a discord as damnable, if more up-to-date, than ever was heard in a haunted house.

In Surrey Street there was a house that rumour asserted had been hermetically sealed, and was not to be re-opened till a hundred years had passed, where, in the eighteenth century, a terrible tragedy had occurred

during the progress of a bridal feast, and the distracted bridegroom, rushing out, had commanded that God's sun should not again settle on the accursed board till the generation yet unborn was in being. And I have a vague recollection of having read, years later, a description of what was seen as the portals were thrown back after their century of peace, and light and air had percolated through the room. One can picture the table decked with its moth-eaten cloth, the piles of dust that represented the viands, the chairs pushed back in weird array, and the odour of the tomb that pervaded everything!

To all which, my enlightened twentieth-century reader, there is probably another side. The whole thing may be an absolute fable.

In the days before Trade had made those gigantic strides which have since dumped its votaries amid the once sacred pages of Debrett, when knights were not as common as blackberries, and the Victorian Order had not become a terror in the land, when buttermen sold butter, and furniture-men sold furniture, and before huge emporiums for the sale of everything had come into existence, it was "bazaars" that supplied the maximum of selection with the minimum of locomotion, such as to-day is to be found in the huge caravanserai yclept "Stores" and in Tottenham Court Road and Westbourne Grove in particular.

In Soho Square, on the western side, where to-day—and all day—men with pronounced features, forbidding countenances, and of usurious tendencies may be seen in a first floor window exchanging views on the iniquitous restrictions associated with stamped paper, a bazaar existed in the long-ago sixties where dogs that squeaked and elephants that wagged their tails might have been bought by children of tender years who, for aught we know, may have since been plucked of their last feather by the vultures that now hover over those happy hunting grounds.

Turning into Oxford Street there was the Queen's Bazaar, afterward converted into the Princess's Theatre, still with us, with its dismal, dingy frontage and limited shelter for ladies with guttural voices; whilst almost opposite was the Pantheon, with perhaps the most chequered career of all, having been, in turn, the National Opera House, the accepted Masquerade house, a theatre, and a bazaar till 1867, when it attained its present proud position as the main tap for the supply of Gilbey's multifarious vintages.

Still further west was the St. James's Bazaar, built by Crockford, and soon converted into a hell, where more monies changed hands and more properties were sold than in all the other bazaars in the universe.

But perhaps the most tenacious of life was the Baker Street Bazaar. In its spacious area was situated an unpretentious shop (since spread half up the street) with two or three windows in Baker Street, while on the hinterland was the bazaar, and over it Tussaud's Waxworks. Entering from King Street was the area occupied annually by the Cattle Show, whilst still further space was available—as we were lately informed by the police reports—for empty coffins, false beards, volatile dukes, lead and bricks in bulk, sleeping and reception rooms, scores of flunkeys, and addenda too multifarious to mention. Never having seen the subterranean Duke nor the bewhiskered Druce, one may be permitted to marvel where all this ghastly conglomeration found shelter, and whether the confusion that must have occurred amongst the Dutch dukes, the English shopmen, the cattle, and the Waxworks can in any way be held responsible for the startling contradictions with which we have lately been regaled.

But does any one who traverses the historic area between Soho Square and Charing Cross give a thought to the interest that once clustered round where Crosse and Blackwell's factory now stands? Does any one realise whilst "held up" in a broken-down "Vanguard" in Shaftesbury Avenue that the neighbourhood once echoed with the Royalist battle-cry "So-ho" in the days of that greatest of Englishmen—Cromwell? Does any one ever give it a thought that Charing Cross was not so very long ago a resort of footpads, and that even so late as the Sixties the sweet waters of the somewhat putrid Thames oozed and bubbled where the District railway station now stands? And how few are aware that, when Drummond's Bank was in course of construction, fossils of mammoth, cave lions, rhinoceros, and Irish deer were found; and that in future ages, excavations will probably unearth skeletons of hybrids we all try to dodge and whom naturalists will describe as voracious, living on suction, apt to beg, borrow, or steal, migratory to a limited extent, and usually to be met with between Charing Cross and St. Paul's or on the plateaus that abut on the Criterion?

As an observant judge once remarked to one of these pariahs who filled up his cup of iniquities by snatching a fowl from a confiding

poulterer's, "God has given you intelligence; your parents have given you a good education; your country has provided you with excellent prospects both for the present and future, instead of which you go about stealing ducks."

Passing still further west along the Strand, the changes of time and idea become more apparent as one contemplates that stronghold of Christianity—Exeter Hall—plastered with bills and lately passed into alien hands; and the period, the surging crowd, all lend themselves to the illusion, and one might almost fancy one heard the echo of 1,000 years ago, "Not this man, but Barabbas."

Oh, the irony of Fate! methought; truly does Time turn the old days to derision; and one knows not whither one's vapourings might have landed one as a zealous constable fixed his official eye upon the stoic who, deeming it advisable to "move on," sought consolation, but found none, in an adjoining tobacconist's by indulging in one of Salmon and Gluckstein's real Havanas (five for a shilling).

Skimming (not wading through) the report of the Court of Inquiry lately dragging its monotonous length in the vicinity of the Chelsea embankment, one was struck by the change that has come over these senseless preliminaries, which occasionally end in smoke and sometimes in legalised military or civil tribunals. For such courts are as old as the hills, and are convened on every possible excuse. If a soldier loses a shoebrush it is (or was) a Court of Inquiry that established the interesting fact; if an officer was accused of a more heinous offence, it was a Court of Inquiry that heard what was to be said.

The only difference is that, whereas the old style cost no more than a few sheets of foolscap and the unnecessary lumbering of regimental records, the identical luxury cannot now be indulged in without an array of Old Bailey lawyers, who harangue the old warriors that constitute the court for hours, utterly oblivious of the fact that they are better judges of things military, and not likely to be carried away by those bursts of eloquence that so impress the twelve jack-puddings of which our bulwarks and liberties are said to be composed.

The earliest of these Courts of Inquiry was in '41, when Lord Cardigan killed Captain Tucket in a duel—and ended in his trial and acquittal by his brother peers.

Later on, in ’44, Lord William Paget and the same bellicose Earl had a domestic squabble in which the former said “he had,” and the latter said “he hadn’t,” and this began by a Court of Inquiry and culminated in the High Court.

Again, in ’54 Lieutenants Perry and Greer were hailed before a Court of Inquiry for practical jokes of a pronounced character, but the inquiry ended in smoke, as it was “revised” by the Minister of War.

In ’61 was the Court of Inquiry in the 4th Dragoon Guards which, disclosing undoubted bullying on the part of Colonel Bentinck (the present Duke of Portland’s father), ended in a court martial, when nothing but interest saved the old gentleman’s bacon.

Later on, there was the Mansfield affair, when a disagreement arose between Sir William Mansfield (afterwards Lord Sandhurst), or his wife, and an aide-de-camp that elicited much that was amusing in regard to purloined jams and other preserves, for which her ladyship was supposed to be celebrated; all which instances ended in the usual way after an infinity of positive assertion met by flat contradiction.

Whether the farce lately enacted, with its lawyers and their speeches, affected the result, or benefited anybody except the lawyers, is a point upon which most people will agree; all which, however, sinks into insignificance in comparison with the question as to when and how did this interference with military tribunals first become tolerated, and how can our Military Council or our Military anything, or the officers constituting the Court, submit to be harangued by “only a civilian,” as one of Robertson’s plays describes outsiders?

In all the military tribunals of the past such an innovation was unheard of. Colonel Crawley, on his trial, had words put into his mouth by Sir William Harcourt (whose reputation as an orator it made), but he was not permitted to address the Court. In the Robertson Court Martial it was the same, and in the Navy to-day a prisoner is defended by “a friend,” but no civilian would be permitted to “quarter deck it” in that conservative service.

Even Colonel Dawkins—who, by the way, was a Household Brigade man—amongst all his eccentric experiences, never got so far as suggesting that a civilian should bridge the chasm that has hitherto existed between the Law Courts and the Horse Guards by all this special

pleading, and one wonders what old Sir George Browne or General Pennefather would have said (or sworn) if such a suggestion had been proposed to them! It may be too much to say there would have been an earthquake, but the foundations of the house would certainly have vibrated.

And it is the ignorance of what the present privileges of the Guards are that makes it difficult to form any opinion on the merits of the case. The friction that these "privileges" used to cause when a Household regiment was occasionally brigaded at Aldershot or Dublin or the Curragh with regiments of the line was, however, undeniable.

It pained old captains with Crimean and Indian medals to be "turned out" by a field officer with a fluffy upper lip and a youthful voice that had not long before sounded at Eton; it was irritating (at least) for colonels commanding distinguished regiments to see a Guard's sentry fumbling with his rifle and deliberately coming to the "carry," and five minutes after "presenting" to a brevet major of the Guards, who was trundling a hoop when the old warrior was in the trenches before Sebastopol; it was annoying to read in general orders special reminders as to the prohibition regarding imperials and capricious shaving, and to see half-a-dozen Guards officers with beards like pioneers; it was amusing to hear (as one did) the son of old Sir Percy Douglas (who was for a little season in the Guards) inform a distinguished field officer that the "executive" command could only be given by a Guardsman to a Guardsman; and still more amusing to hear the retort which made mincemeat of the privilege, at least, on that occasion—all which nonsense has, however, been considerably modified. By all means let the Guards retain their privileges and licences—but let them in mercy be "consumed on the premises." And if the physique of these favoured regiments is not as fine as of yore, no one will deny that their "marching past" and their "dressing" are far superior to that of the line and "pretty" enough to please even Admiral Scott himself.

It may further be conceded without fear of contradiction that the Queen's Company of the Grenadiers in 1862 was a magnificent specimen of physique and drilled to perfection under Lord Henry Percy and Micky Bruce.

Beards, indeed, have always been a cause of offence. In the tropics (except in India) a man is compelled to shave; with the thermometer below zero, the same regulation is rigidly enforced.

It was Colonel Crealock's beard at Gibraltar that was the indirect cause of an officer being tried by Court Martial; it was Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar's and Colonel Phillip's beards that led to invidious remarks in the Dublin Division; and, until the razor is abolished beyond the precincts of the four-mile radius, so long will a link remain between the grand old days of the muzzle loader and cold steel and the modern requirements for potting an enemy at a thousand yards rise.

When the Metropolitan Board of Works was at the zenith of its power, and thoroughfares were being projected, and whole streets were disappearing and ancient rookeries being demolished, it was incredible the leakage that appeared to exist, and how the friends of indiscreet or dishonest employés reaped a harvest by acquiring dilapidated buildings for a song, and standing out for huge compensation when the day for demolition drew nigh.

An astute former hanger-on at Faultless's cock-pit in Endell Street surprised me considerably on one occasion as he stood at the door of a dilapidated beer-house in Covent Garden by informing me that he had bought it for a trifle, and six months later I was literally staggered by again meeting the rascal shovelling out potatoes at a little greengrocery shop where now stands the London and Westminster Bank opposite the Law Courts.

He explained that he had a brother in a humble but trusted position at Spring Gardens, and that his old beer-house had ceased to exist, and he expected his "present property" would "come down" before long.

Green Street, leading from Leicester Square, was another channel for the acquisition of large profits, and when every house was a bug-walk, and demolition a matter of a few months, the news was actually "offered" to a man I knew well able to find the requisite purchase money, but rejected from misplaced prudential motives.

The present London Pavilion was another glaring instance of jobbery, and years before it was necessary to hustle the ex-Scott's waiter from the cosy nest-egg he so diligently nursed, the Board of Works descended on him like an avalanche with a peremptory notice to quit.

At this stage one Villiers comes upon the scene, but whether he was a scion of the noble house of Jersey or Clarendon is not clear. Suffice that tradition credited him with having once been a considerable actor who had made a great hit in a minor part in the *Overland Route* at the Haymarket during the fifties. Later, he appears to have become lessee of the transpontine Canterbury Hall, where he was a dismal failure, and spent the latter portion of his tenancy in bed—a victim of gout and the importunities of irrepressible bill-stickers.

It was in these darkest hours that the Board of Works entered into his life, and in an incredibly short space of time he had enlisted the co-operation of a sporting furrier, had hustled the unhappy Loibel out, and was in undisputed possession of the London Pavilion. How the £103,000 was found to pay the out-going man is of no particular importance, suffice that so indecent was the haste that an auction was deemed superfluous; the entire contents were turned over at a valuation, and as Loibel toddled out Villiers toddled in, and—undisturbed by parochial or other demands—he gradually rose to affluence, periodically visited Continental watering-places, was a person to be reckoned with in a mushroom political club, and died recently worth a considerable personalty.

The juggle over the Pavilion never attracted much interest, and the gladiators being respectively a German and a Jew the transaction was forgotten almost at its inception.

Passing through the Opera Colonnade I tried not long ago to locate the exact shop—once a cigar merchant's—in which the Raleigh, originally known as the "Old Havana Cigar Club," may be said to have had its being, for it was whilst sitting on tubs one afternoon in the fifties that three or four Mohawks of the first order persuaded Tod Heatly—the ground landlord—to provide some sort of superior night-house which, by opening its doors at 10 p.m. and not closing them till the last roysterer had reeled home, would "meet a want long felt," as modern advertisements occasionally describe their worthless wares.

It was later—in the early seventies—that the proprietorship changed hands, and was worked on more commercial lines by the Brothers Ewen (triplets), who, believing in quantity rather than quality, periodically sat as a committee under the chairmanship of an amiable old gentleman

(Lord Monson) and elected everything and everybody capable of producing the increased subscription.

It was in the solitary long room of the Tod Heatly era that details were arranged for the duel (which never came off) in regard to an accusation of foul play that was made in a Pall Mall club, when an old gentleman, who was in Court dress, was considerably astonished at receiving a flip on his calf from an erratic trump. And in this room, too, enough Justerini's brandy was consumed of a night to float the motors which now lumber that once-sacred chamber. For whisky and other emanations of the potato were then practically unknown and only heard of by the privileged few who had seen an illicit Boucicault still on the stage.

Proceeding yet further west I passed the College of Surgeons—presented by George IV. in a fit of after-dinner generosity to that distinguished body to be held for all time on a pepper-corn rent. One can almost picture the burst of humble gratitude that gushed forth at the gracious act, and the bland smile that illumined the anointed features at the consciousness of having done a generous deed without being one penny the worse for it. It was condescensions such as this that endeared "the first gentleman" to a loyal and dutiful people. And then across the square, where Northumberland House once stood, I wondered if one human being could locate the spot within fifty yards, and whether the old lion that topped it pointed his tail to the east or west, a subject on which more bets have been made than ever fell to the lot of man or beast.

CHAPTER XIX.
THE ROCK AND THE CAPE.

THE providential success of Playfair in the Cambridgeshire of ’72 had released more than one of our clique from the jaws of the usurer, and Bill Stourton, by the judicious investment of a fiver, was in expectation of being the proud owner of £300 on the following Monday.

Dashing down to Somersetshire overflowing with filial duty and in anticipation of our early embarkation for Gibraltar, a considerable scare was created one morning by a groom running up to the house and reporting that the sheriff’s carriage and two grimy beaks from Taunton had pulled up at the “George” and were making tender inquiries as to Mr. William’s whereabouts.

All this occurred on Monday, when, as it happened, Billy was speeding towards London to realise at Tattersall’s the result of his sagacity at Newmarket. And so, when the oleaginous visitors inquired at the ancestral porch, the reply they received was discouraging in the extreme.

“That is Mr. William’s bedroom,” pointing to a window, was the ingenuous servitor’s reply; “you can go and examine it if you wish; but I give you my word he left for London this morning.” And so it came to pass that the astute “Fitch and Son,” of Southwark, failed to serve the capias, and the rascally Israelite who had made “affidavit” as to his intention of “leaving the kingdom” (as embarking with the regiment might certainly be construed by a quibble) had to pay the cost of the imposing coach that had been provided for his conveyance to Taunton.

The faithful butler had omitted to add that the young reprobate was returning the same evening, and that the dog-cart was to meet him at nine.

But the reprieve was not of long duration, and within a year Bill had sold his commission and become a full private in the Blues.

Passing into the Horse Guards one day a former brother officer chanced to inquire of the sentry the way to the military secretary's, and was considerably startled by the reply, "First door to the left, Polly."

The sentry was ex-Lieutenant Stourton.

Gibraltar then—as now—was a favourite winter resort, and the "Club House Hotel" opposite the main guard did a roaring trade.

Here Lady Herbert of Lea and her youthful son, the present Lord Pembroke, sojourned for some weeks in the Sixties, and it was to the inquiring turn of mind of the young nobleman's tutor that Gibraltar was almost indebted for a very promising row.

In one room, it appears, a cantankerous Irishman and his wife were staying, in the next the tutor, and whilst the Irishman positively swore he had one morning seen the prying tutor's face glued to the fanlight as vehemently did the pedagogue swear on a sack of bibles that he had never glued his nose to a fanlight in his life.

What there was to peep at was not quite clear, for the supposed "object" in any costume was not fair to look upon, and so after mutual recriminations and mutual apologies the affair was hushed up, and expectant Gibraltar was robbed of a lawful excitement.

A fly-leaf that appeared weekly—why, no one could explain—although less original than one might have wished, yet possessing a symbolism that was unquestionable, on one occasion appeared with a verbatim extract from a Spanish paper of the escapades of an adventurer who was exploiting the neighbourhood of Madrid.

Weeks apparently had elapsed before it had caught the eye of our lynx-eyed editor, and one day when Ansaldo invited certain of us to compare a recent resident at his hotel with the description in the very latest "local intelligence" it became apparent to all that a lately departed wayfarer was the redoubtable personage referred to. "By Jove! I lost fifty to him last week at loo, and then gave him a shakedown," remarked one; and, "D—d if I didn't lend him my horse to go as far as Cadiz, and it's not to be back till to-morrow," added another; and then the local tailor came running down to the Club House, and Ansaldo remembered

he had paid his hotel bill by a cheque, and within a week a dozen victims realised that they had assisted in one way or another to make the gentleman's Mediterranean trip a pleasant one.

But money at the Rock was literally a drug, thanks to the existence of Sacconi, a Genoese grocer. This extraordinary man was everybody's banker; if one lost at the races it was Sacconi who settled the account; mess bills were paid by Sacconi; fifty—one hundred Isabels—were only to be asked for to be obtained by initialling the amount at the shop.

Apparently indifferent to risk, the astute Italian was, however, working on a certainty. Immediately a regiment was under orders for the Rock, a list of every officer's "length of tether" was transmitted by Perkins, his London agent, a city knight; whilst, in addition to the value of one's commission, the impossibility of leaving the Rock without his knowledge, and the "Moorish Castle" frowning on the heights, enabled Sacconi to amass a huge fortune, to marry his daughters to officers of the garrison, and be an honoured guest in after years at the "Convent," the Governor's official residence.

But all this was in the days of purchase.

Meeting the ex-Governor, Sir William Codrington, one day in Bond Street on the point of being run over, he jocosely remarked, as I went to his assistance, "Different from Gibraltar, eh?"

To any but enthusiasts of riding, Gibraltar was (and probably is) a most overrated station, with nothing to recommend it but its proximity to London. Every afternoon was devoted to couples riding to the Cork woods, and returning from its shaded glades just before gun-fire.

No one ever dreamt of riding with his own wife; indeed, so accepted was this custom that on one occasion a couple having been seen riding together, an excited newsmonger rushed about inquiring, "What's up? Holroyd has been seen riding with his own wife!"

But the advent of Fitzroy Somerset gave an immense fillip to sport, and when, later, six couples of cast hounds came direct from Badminton every jack-pudding purchased a screw and became an ardent fox-hunter.

A German apothecary, who had not straddled a quadruped since he left the Vaterland, became an enthusiastic rider, and thrilled the less daring horsemen by descriptions of runs, and how "der 'orse svearved to

him right, and I ’it ’im on the ’ead to his left, and den he svearved to the left, and I ’it ’im on the ’ead to his right,” till everybody became more or less horsy, and not to keep a crock with four legs, or three, was tantamount to an admission that one was literally past praying for.

Every youngster purchased a quadruped—some vicious and young, others blind and in the last stage of senile decay—and Staines, an assistant surgeon, was so frequently sent whirling into space that his animal was christened “Benzine-Collas,” because it was “warranted to remove Staines.”

Here, too, was a fox-hunting chaplain known as “Tally-ho Jonah,” who ended his days as shepherd of a peculiarly desirable flock amidst the rich pastures of the Midlands.

On his death-bed some years ago, his valet consoled him with the assurance that he was going to a better land, to which the worthy divine replied: “John, there’s no place like old England.” R.I.P.

But the mania by no means ended here, and Grant, the Principal Medical Officer—a bony Scot with the largest feet ever inflicted on man—literally paralysed a group who one day saw him in the distance leisurely approaching on horseback.

“Great heavens!” was the universal exclamation as he came nearer, “why, it’s ‘Benzine-Collas’ going as quiet as a lamb,” and it was agreed that the fiery little Mogador stallion was being imposed upon by old Grant, under the impression that he was between the shafts.

Across the bay was Tangier, and many found an inexhaustible store of delight in visiting that most Oriental of towns.

Within four days of Paris, it seemed incredible that here was a spot that civilisation had apparently overlooked, and which still retained all the barbaric pomp of a thousand years ago. Fowls with their throats cut lay about the streets awaiting preparation for pilau; malefactors for the most trifling offences had their hands hacked off in the leading thoroughfares; whilst under the windows of the Sherif of Wazan’s palace half a dozen naked musicians blew their insides out from morning to night, and discoursed a series of diabolical sounds that made the contemplation of anything but their music impossible.

Here Martin—late messman of the *Racoon*—had started the "Royal Hotel," and after providing his visitors with an excellent dinner, favoured them with morceaux on a flute, of which he prided himself on being a virtuoso.

Martin was as black as the blackest hat, and from the suspicious slits in his ears justified the assumption that he was a liberated West Indian slave. The music he emitted with eyes closed, possibly the most soulful, was certainly the most doleful, and had evidently been picked up when watching the anchor being weighed on H.M.S. *Racoon*.

"Where do you come from, Martin?" on one occasion inquired an inquisitive officer.

"Devonshire," was the unexpected reply; "but I left home in my infancy."

He had made this assertion so often that there is no doubt he believed it.

Returning from Tangier on one occasion, I brought with me a quantity of Kuss-Kuss cloth, which catching the eye of a voracious brother subaltern he inquired where I had got it.

"Oh," I said, "the Sherif of Wazan sent it over for distribution in return for the guard of honour we supplied last month when he was here."

"Then I'm entitled to some?" he remarked.

"I'm afraid it's all been claimed," I replied, and to keep up the illusion I got half a dozen youngsters to cross and re-cross the square with a piece under their arms and deposit it somewhere, for another to fetch it and leave it elsewhere. It seemed, indeed, that the traffic was never to end, and next morning an official complaint was made by the aggrieved one, and he discovered he had been the victim of a practical joke.

Apropos of this class of grumbler, an amusing story was once told me by the captain of a P. and O. It was in the days that the skipper "messed" the passengers, and it was this officer's habit to have a saucerful of porridge every morning about seven on the bridge.

The feeding on a P. and O. is proverbially liberal, yet not content with the enormous breakfast provided, certain grumblers complained that considering the price they paid they surely were entitled to porridge. Inwardly chuckling, the skipper reluctantly consented, with the result (as he told me) that instead of devouring two mutton chops, eggs, and marmalade *ad libitum* at eight, he was a considerable gainer by the satisfying effect of two-pennyworth of porridge at seven.

During my two years at Gibraltar cholera appeared, and anything more terrible than such a visitation in such a circumscribed spot can hardly be conceived. With a strict "cordon" established, there was no getting away from it, and men who the night before were in rude health were often buried at gun-fire.

To be afraid of it was tantamount (so doctors asserted) to courting it, and so regimental bands were ordered to play daily on the Alameda by way of diverting the public mind, and not a drum was heard at the numerous military funerals that wended their way towards the north front.

By night the "corpse-lights" over the burial ground emitted a weird glow, and many a subaltern visiting the sentries before daylight would shiver and his teeth rattle as he skirted the unearthly illumination.

To such an extent did downright funk seize upon some that an officer now living in London—a C.B. of overwhelming interest—asked everybody the best preventive, and jokes were indulged in at his expense, and he swallowed tablespoonfuls of salt and raw porpoise liver, as this or the other prescribed.

Distracted, one afternoon he sought consolation by proceeding to the house of a fair scorpion (persons born on the Rock) he had known in happier days, and literally collapsed as he met her coffin emerging from her door.

Apropos of this terrible scourge, an instance that many can vouch for occurred some years previously in India.

My regiment was being decimated by cholera, and corpses were hurriedly placed in an outhouse that was infested with rats.

The sentries had orders to periodically tap with their rifles on the door, and on one occasion tapping too hard, the door opened, and the

Armourer Sergeant, who had been brought in a few hours previously, was seen sitting up on the trestle.

Years after I saw the man daily, and he completed his twenty-one years' service instead of being buried alive, as many a poor wretch has been.

Colonel Zebulon Pike was by way of being a consul representing the United States in South Africa and the most amusing liar I have ever had the good fortune to meet.

The embodiment of generosity, no yarn he ever spun could have injured a fly; that there never was a word of truth in them was an accepted axiom.

"Yes, sir," as he invariably prefixed his remarks, "it was when I was commanding my regiment during the rebellion that Captain Crusoe reported to me he had captured a spy. 'Bring him before me,' I said sternly, and when the rascal appeared I pointed to the sun, saying: 'Before yon luminary disappears behind yon hills you die'; and turning to Crusoe, I added: 'Remove him, Colonel Crusoe.' 'Colonel, sir?' inquired he. 'Yes, sir,' said I, 'you're colonel from this very moment.'"

The Colonel once expressed a desire to attend the Governor's levée; but bewailing the fact that he had not brought his uniform, he proceeded to describe it.

"The pants, sir, are a rich blue, with a broad lace stripe down their sides; my tunic is also blue, and my breast is covered with medals—I have a drawerful of them. Around my waist, sir, is a crimson sash, and in my hat a long ostrich feather sweeps down to my shoulder."

"But that's all easily arranged, Colonel," we explained, and on the eventful day we proceeded to truss him.

Never was a more imposing sight, and as the guard of honour marched down to Government House the Colonel stood on the pavement, immovable as a rock, with hand to his feathered billycock. And the men (as had been arranged) came to the "carry," and passed him with all the "honours of war."

"My God, sir, it brought tears to my eyes," he afterwards told us in his pride, "to see yon fine fellows swinging past; it reminded me of my

own regiment. I thank you, gentlemen, for the compliment you paid a comrade."

These colonial levées of the past were often held of an evening to enable the introduction of refreshments, without which the attendance would certainly have been meagre.

The local grandees liberally prepared for the coming feast, and having eaten to repletion proceeded to fill their pockets.

"You may as well have the sauce," once interposed an irate A.D.C. as he saw a native pocketing a fowl, and he deliberately poured the contents of a tureen into his lap.

At these "go-as-you-please" functions, speeches more or less impromptu invariably took place, and it was then that the "Colonel" was literally in his element.

Panting for his opportunity, it was only after some wag had proposed his health, and described how we had "one amongst us who had seen the mighty buffalo on its native prairie" (which he assuredly never had), etc., that the Colonel rose and delighted his hearers with a string of most amusing lies.

Lady Shand, the wife of the Chief Justice, once sitting near him, after one of his flowery orations, began to tell him of her own native home in Scotland, and of the loch that stretched for miles before the ancestral hall, and was considerably surprised by the Colonel's rejoinder: "Aye, and the swans; I can see them now."

"But there were no swans, Colonel," she gently corrected; but henceforth held her peace when the staggering retort was given: "Oh, yes there were; at least, in my time."

No function was considered complete without "the Colonel," and he was a frequent guest at one place or another. Apparently capable of dispensing with sleep, no matter how late the night's orgy daylight found him on the verandah with a green cigar, after which he proceeded towards the Grand river ostensibly to bathe.

"Can't do without my morning swim," he once told a man who met him with a bath-towel over his arm; but the towel showed no signs of

having been used, and it was recognised that the Colonel never stripped, and that his ablutions were primitive to a degree.

But the Cape Town of to-day has undergone quite as much change as our modern Babylon, and where a railway station as big as St. Pancras now exists, a wooden shanty with a single line fifty miles long was all that represented railway enterprise in the long-ago sixties.

It was by the courtesy of Captain Mills, the Assistant Colonial Secretary—afterwards Sir Charles Mills, agent general in London—that a delightful party was organised for the shooting of the "Sicker Vlei," a vast expanse of water in the vicinity of Wellington.

This magnificent lake is the resort of every kind of wild beast and bird. Strings of flamingoes wade leisurely about it, whilst wild geese and swans of enormous proportions float lazily over one's head; antelopes and buck of every description come down to water, and the Cape leopard—the most treacherous and cowardly of four-footed creatures—is to be met with in considerable numbers as day begins to break. The procedure that obtains is similar to that in all ordinary mountain loch shooting, with the solitary exception that it necessitates a start about 3 a.m., so that every one is posted amongst the rushes at two hundred yards' intervals an hour before daybreak. The excitement, the delight, the profound silence of that hour when Nature seems to rouse itself for its daily routine of activity, requires an abler pen than mine to describe.

With a rifle in hand and a shot gun at one's side, there is, however, nothing for it but to wait for daybreak, wondering whether buck or antelope, cheetah or wild fowl will be the first to come within range.

"Trekking" with our span of oxen to a farmhouse, where only two cots were available, it was our nightly custom to play "nap" as to who should occupy the beds and who the kitchen table and dresser, and the excitement ran just as high as it did in the days when fifties and hundreds were at stake in the card room of the old Raleigh.

But the losers did not lose much, for almost before one was asleep it was time to be up for our usual 3 a.m. start.

With me was placed dear old Arthur Barkly, the worst shot and most passionate of good fellows, last Governor of Heligoland, and long since

gone over to the majority, and it evokes a smile when even now I think of how, having missed with both barrels two huge wild geese that leisurely floated twenty yards over his head, he threw a cartridge box and then a ramrod in his passion at the unoffending birds.

But the shot had scared other denizens of the plain, and bang, bang in every direction indicated that all our guns were in action as cheetahs and antelopes might be seen scuttling on all sides. Nothing further being left for us, we proceeded to count our bag and return to the farmstead.

After a few days devoted to “braying” the skins and “curing” the antelope meat for future consumption, we resumed our dreary bumping “trek” into the interior in the hope of meeting with big game.

Lions are occasionally, but rarely, met with in these parts, and it is with reference to a dramatic incident that might have ended fatally that I will confine my present remarks. Returning one evening to our location, with literally only three ball cartridges amongst us, one of the Kaffir boys descried in the distance a lion and lioness and three cubs. With bated breath and excitement running high, a council of war was hastily convened, and the pros and cons., the direction of the wind, and the dearth of ammunition having been variously discussed, it was decided that to attack them would be unwise, if not absolutely foolhardy. A wounded lion or lioness with its cubs is probably as dangerous as a man-eating tiger; yet, despite all our entreaties to the contrary, one daring spirit determined to attempt to stalk them.

Loading both barrels of his rifle with ball, with the other solitary cartridge placed handily in his pocket, and divested of all other impediments, he hastily retired to make a circuit and so get within shot against the wind.

Suddenly we heard the sharp report of his rifle, and then, after a second, we saw the lion make for the spot whence the smoke had come, whilst the lioness and the cubs scampered off in the opposite direction.

Again there was a report, and next we saw Fellowes running with all his might, followed by the lion.

What ensued may best be given in his own words, as narrated to us that night.

“I had evidently missed my first shot, and whilst putting in my other cartridge, I saw the brute making for me; again I fired, and I saw it staggered him, but still he came on, and seeing a small pond a few yards off I decided to make for that. Barely had I risen to my feet when, with a roar, the brute was close behind me, and at the very moment I dashed into the pond he aimed a blow at me which grazed my forehead, and I fell prostrate into it. On recovering I cautiously peeped, and there the brute stood on the edge within three yards of me. Again I submerged, but every time I moved for air he roared, although afraid to enter the water. This went on for an hour, when conceive my delight at seeing him roll over from loss of blood.

“Cautiously approaching, I found he was stone dead.”

Fellowes had literally escaped death by a hair’s breadth; but the scar he carried with him to his grave affected his brain, and he was never the same man again. Had the lion been one inch nearer his skull would have been smashed like an egg shell. Years after I saw the lion’s head and shoulders at a well-known naturalist’s in Piccadilly, depicted life-like dashing out of the rushes that encircled the African pond.

Our excitement for big game being temporarily satiated after our comrade’s narrow escape, we decided to direct our steps towards more peaceful pastures in the neighbourhood of Stellenbosch. Here large ostrich farms exist, and it was a unique experience to watch drafts of these huge birds being transferred from one farm to another. The procedure is original. Two or three mounted Kaffirs with long driving whips circle round and round the twenty or thirty birds, lashing them unmercifully on their bare legs till they start into a trot, which eventually ends in a pace that the riders at full gallop have difficulty in keeping up with. In my search for information I was assured that the feathers so much in demand for “matinee hats” were moulted from the birds; but this I found to be not strictly accurate, and much cruel “plucking” passed under my own observation. Ostrich egg omelette is delicious; six of us breakfasted off *one* egg, and my sensations were as if I had swallowed an omnibus.

But perhaps the most ridiculous experience to be obtained in South Africa is associated with the (apparently) inoffensive penguin. Any one looking at these sedate creatures at the Zoological Gardens would hardly

believe that they can bite and take a piece out of one's calf with the dexterity of a bull-terrier. It was shortly after the experience above related that we turned our steps towards Penguin Island, which lies to the south of Table Bay. We had been offered a "cast over" in one of the fishing boats that proceed there periodically in the interests of the lessee who, renting this valuable island for a few pounds a year, makes an enormous income by the sale of the guano.

We had landed cheerily, and were roaring at the absurd attitudes taken up under every ledge and stone by these pompous old birds, when poor Bobby, going a little too close, was seized by the leg with the grip of a rat-trap.

When the guano parties visit the island they combine another industry, and collect some thousands of eggs, which are considered a delicacy by the Africander gourmets.

Personally, I found them too strong, although I plead guilty to having massacred some fifty penguins by knocking them on the head for the sake of their breasts. The oil that exhales from them for months, despite the alum and sifted ashes, is incredible; but they will repay the trouble, and after scientific manipulation by a London furrier are highly appreciated for muffs and boas.

The albatross that swarm in the vicinity of Table Bay, and which are caught in large numbers by the Malay fishermen, enabled me to create a new industry. Finding that the flesh only was used by the Malays, I offered the handsome price of one penny for every pair of pinion bones duly delivered at the barracks; these I forthwith filed off at each end, and tying them into bundles, stuffed them into ants' nests. Within a week they were as clear as whistles, and within a month I possessed a fagot of some hundreds. The recital of an absurd sequel may not be amiss. Albatross quills of twelve and fifteen inches are a popular species of pipe stem, which, when encircled with a threepenny silver band attached to a shilling amber mouthpiece, may be seen in leading tobacconists' labelled twenty shillings. Entering a palatial establishment in Regent Street on my return home, I got the proprietor into conversation, and was assured that they were very difficult things to procure, and that he would gladly "pay anything" if only he could get some more. Having thoroughly compromised him, I returned next day with a cab full, and although

exceptionally long and perfect, I was surprised to hear they were by no means up to the mark, and in my desperation accepted a box of cigars in exchange for what he probably cleared £50 on.

Yet another experience—not strictly of a sporting character—was connected with sticks. On my return home I brought with me some hundreds of the rarest specimens from Ceylon, Mauritius, and the Cape. Conceive my disappointment, after an animated barter with Briggs, of St. James's Street, to be grateful to accept any three of my own sticks mounted to order in exchange for what must have supplied half the golden calves of the West End with sticks varying from two to three guineas a-piece.

The above two incidents exemplify what is described as the encouragement of British industries.

At the risk of wearying the reader I will give an absurd incident that once occurred in India. We had organised a party to hunt up a tiger that had been seen near the village of Dharwar, not far from Belgaum. On our way to the rendezvous—where the serious search was to commence—one of our party who had wandered a little out of his course rushed frantically up to us, exclaiming: "I came suddenly within thirty yards of the brute fast asleep at the foot of the nullah."

"Well," we all asked, "why didn't you shoot him?"

"'Pon my word, I had half a mind to," was the heartfelt reply—"but, so help me bob, I funked it."

Touching the fringe of these vast hunting grounds will, I hope, be forgiven me, for although six thousand miles from London, they nevertheless bring up very happy memories of the long-ago sixties.

Sir John Bissett, afterwards commanding the Infantry Brigade at Gibraltar, but at the time a resident at Grahamstown, was the Great Nimrod of the Cape.

It was he that organised the elephant hunts for the Duke of Edinburgh, at one of which the Prince shot the immense beast whose head confronted one on entering Clarence House. Although I did not actually see it shot, I was not far distant at the time.

It was weeks after our party's return to Cape Town that Colonel Zebulon Pike brought me two splendid stuffed specimens of the boatswain bird, the rarest of the gull tribe.

As I admired their mauve and white plumage and the two long scarlet feathers that constitute their tail, I could not resist remarking: "Why, Colonel, where did you get these?" To which he replied: "I shot them one morning after bathing, before you fellows were up."

There was not a boatswain bird within fifty miles of where we had been, and the specimens had evidently been cured for years.

It was only a righteous lie, such as the generous "Colonel" could never resist.

CHAPTER XX.
EASTWARD HO!

PERHAPS no ingredients are more certain to produce an explosion in a limited space than a Post Captain proceeding as a passenger on the ship of an officer some months his junior. It was my privilege once to watch one of these preliminary simmerings during the latter sixties and the subsequent inevitable dénouement.

George Malcolm, who in his younger days had had a distinguished career as flag-lieutenant at Portsmouth, but for a decade had lived the indolent life of a German at Frankfort, being compelled by the regulations to put in sea time as a Post Captain, was proceeding with a new crew to recommission the *Danae* on the West Indian station. It was not long before he developed his Teutonic acquirements. Smoking half the night in his cabin, he intimated to his crew that they might smoke when they pleased. Keeping his lights burning after hours, he next came into collision with the master-at-arms, who reported the irregularity to the captain, a peremptory order being issued that Malcolm was not to be made an exception, and that the regulations were to be enforced. The little man—Captain Grant, of the *Himalaya*—who thus entered the lists at the first challenge was well-known throughout the Navy as a veritable tartar. Standing little over five feet high, he had the body of a giant; his lower proportions were short and far from comely. These were the combatants for whom the arena was now cleared. Malcolm opened the attack by repeating the light-burning after hours. Grant retorted by ordering the master-at-arms to enter if necessary and carry out his orders. Next morning the two captains met in presence of their respective first lieutenants, and abused and accused each other of insubordination and mutiny.

The crews meanwhile took up the quarrel, and some of the *Danae* men had the temerity to cheek the master-at-arms. To this little Grant replied by tying up six of them to the shrouds, and giving them four dozen apiece with the cat. This checked the effervescence, and a few days later the ship entered Port Royal.

Then followed reports. But the admiral was one of the psalm-singing school, and not possessing sufficient character to adjudicate upon it himself, referred the matter home. Meanwhile the *Danae* was recommissioned and sailed away, the *Himalaya* returned to Portsmouth, and so the matter ended.

A flogging in the old days was a very "thorough" affair, and lost nothing in the matter of detail. Four stalwart boatswains stripped to their shirts stood like statues, on the deck reposed four green baize bags, each containing a cat.

When all was ready the captain's warrant was read—for it may or may not be generally known that every skipper, from battleship to pigboat, is a justice of the peace, and has the power of life and death on the high seas—and then the operation began. Occasionally some genius, having prearranged to outwit the authorities, would feign collapse by suddenly tucking up his legs; but a feel of the pulse and a nod soon adjusted matters, and the culprit was in "full song." And then the little man made a speech, not too long, but very much to the point: "Now, my lads, when you want any more, you know where to come for it." After which he cocked his cap, and descended to his cabin with his sword clanking behind. It's a way they had in the Navy.

All this, of course, was before the central authority was transferred from Whitehall to Whitechapel, and without expressing an opinion on the merits or demerits of corporal punishment, one may be permitted to ask: Are the bluejackets of to-day any better than Peel's Naval Brigade in the Crimea, or the tough old tars that helped to quell the Mutiny? Are the specimens one occasionally meets smoking cigarettes and Orange Blossom tobacco superior to the old sea dogs that chewed what would have killed a rhinoceros and rolled quids of 'baccy saturated in rum? Perhaps yes, perhaps no. Be that as it may, flogging has ever been found the only deterrent for a certain class of scum which occasionally rises to the surface even in the Navy.

On another occasion, when I was embarking at Portsmouth, barely had the *Himalaya* left the side of the quay when the Honourable Mrs. Montmorency (afterwards Lady Frankfort), accompanied by her father, Sir John Michel, and a crowd of sisters, cousins, and aunts, might have been seen rushing frantically towards the slowly-moving trooper; but the cries fell on deaf ears, and the good ship continued her course.

Next night in Queenstown Harbour a bumboat might have been seen struggling against wind and tide to reach the trooper lying a mile out at sea, which, on getting alongside, was found to contain the lady, who, since we last saw her, had undertaken a journey of four hundred miles, attended by every discomfort that travelling flesh is heir to, and all because she did not know little Grant, and expected to impress him by arriving five minutes late. The same lady very nearly had a similar experience a month later at St. Helena, and only just reached the deck as the "blue Peter" was being hauled down.

It was on this same voyage that a subaltern, whose duties compelled him to be on deck at daylight, remarked to the navigating-lieutenant later in the day: "How splendid the sun looked this morning rising over the hills." "Oh! yes," was the snubbing reply, "we call that Cape Flyaway. Why, man, we are five hundred miles from the West coast."

That night, when hammocks were being issued, a cry of "Land on the port bow" brought all hands on deck, and lo! we were steaming full speed for land with 1,400 souls on board. Almost in front of us was an angry surf, a little beyond it tropical foliage was distinctly visible, and then followed the silence as when engines are stopped, and with extra hands at both wheels, the shout of "Hard a-starboard!" pierced the darkness, and we were going full speed in the opposite direction.

Cape Flyaway cost poor little Piper a reprimand and half-pay for life, and an innocent wife and family—God help them—may still be suffering for that disregarded sunrise.

When dear old Admiral Commerell succeeded Purvis as Commander-in-Chief at the Cape, things at Government House hummed as they had never done before, and the energy that the little man put into his hospitality was as conspicuous as when fighting on sea or on land. With more than the lives attributed to a cat, it is incredible that he should have survived a blunderbuss full of slugs on the Prah a few years later, which,

fired point blank, drove half a monkey-jacket into his lungs. Though brought to Cape Town on the *Rattlesnake*, more as a formality than with any hopes of recovery, and for months after spitting up pieces of blue serge, he rallied as he had often done before, and the last time I saw him was in a Maxim gun show-room in Victoria Street, where, as "Managing Director," he explained the intricacies of the weapon to every 'Arry that chose to look in, and so trade laid hands in his declining years on as brave a recipient of the Victoria Cross as ever trod a quarter-deck.

When the flying squadron under Beauchamp Seymour was expected at Ascension on its return from the Cape, great excitement prevailed from the possibility of a visit, and a trooper that was "laying off" was in such deadly fear of any want of smartness being observable that the washing by the soldiers' wives that had been permitted was made short work of, and petticoats, shirts, and socks that were fluttering in the breeze were ruthlessly ordered down, for fear some signalman should detect a strange signal and note it in the log-book. For this lynx-eyed race is incapable of being hoodwinked; indeed, so dexterous did they become in the Channel Squadron some years ago (and doubtless are so still) that they read the signals for fleet manœuvres before the flags were broken, necessitating the entire bunch being rolled into one, and so giving every ship an equal chance of displaying their smartness. Of the turtle we discussed recently, the "last phase" is to be seen in the smoking-room of a well-known hostelry in Leadenhall Street, where, peeping through the tanks, numerous specimens may be seen blinking and winking as if in reproach at the unfair advantage taken of them by perfidious Albion in leading them into captivity when guests of the nation and in an interesting condition.

Ascension, as most of us are aware, is on the direct road to the Cape and within easy distance of St. Helena—a by no means unpleasant place, despite an unjust prejudice that attaches to it.

It was on board a Union steamer that the absurd incident I witnessed took place, when the diamond fields were coming into notice and attracting speculators in every kind of ware likely to find favour amongst the natives, who had not then been educated in Houndsditch ways to the extent they have since arrived at. The genius who contemplated a rich harvest not discounted by any such absurd formalities as paying "duty," declaring contraband, or propitiating officials apt to be too inquisitive,

was a Hebrew jeweller of a pronounced type with the unusual adornment of carroty hair, who afterwards developed into a Bond Street shopkeeper, and may still be seen shorn of his sunny locks, which nevertheless still retain a pleasing suspicion of the blaze they once emitted. The chief officer was a shrewd individual, who long before we arrived at Table Bay had taken his passenger's measure, and what added insult to injury was a presentation to him of a wretched ring the wholesale price of which could not have exceeded ten shillings. Had he pressed a five-pound note into his hand it would have proved a less expensive procedure. The sequel was disastrous, as, passing through the dock gates, 'Enery was requested to turn out his pockets, and the percentage to the informant amounted to a very handsome sum. Who the informant was—actuated by duty!—it is needless to discuss, but our friend got to the Fields at last and turned a considerable profit on his "Brummagem" wares.

Years later his enterprise again brought him into notice by providing a young ass (whom many will recollect), who had come into £70,000 on attaining his majority, not only with a flat, but completely furnishing it, and then smothering him with bracelets and bangles for personal wear, and trinkets and gimcracks that made him rattle to a greater extent than the historical lady of Banbury Cross.

The sequel was more melodramatic. Within a year the entire £70,000 was gone, within another year the prodigal was in his grave, and, despite the strenuous efforts of an elder brother to recover a trifle from the clutches of a philanthropist, a feather merchant, and dramatic author—all since gathered into Abraham's bosom—the shekels never changed hands —s'help me—and 'Enery is still one of the most respected Elders in Israel.

It was in '65 on the island of Ascension, where I happened temporarily to be, that an awful tragedy was on the verge of being investigated by a Court of Inquiry, but it was realised that the terrible Atlantic rollers that perpetrated the cruel deed and the innocent children that were the victims had left no data for the groundwork of the conventional farce.

It was on that dismal rock whose only merits are its strategical coaling position and its inexhaustible supply of turtle that during the season when those insidious rollers of unbroken water, without sound,

without warning, suddenly spread over the sandy beach, two or three children of an officer of Marines were suddenly swept off their legs and carried by the back-wash with the velocity of a millstream towards the coral reefs a hundred yards out at sea, where death awaited them.

On the one side an expanse of sand that forthwith resumed its placid, shining surface, on the other a ripple literally bristling with fins of the most voracious species of shark known to naturalists.

In a second it was all over, and the crimson pall that covered the face of the blue Atlantic told all there was to tell of the terrible catastrophe.

The few observation boxes containing niggers on the look-out for turtle had seen nothing, heard nothing; the only eye-witness was the helpless nursemaid, and only because there was nothing to tell was the farce of a "Court of Inquiry" abandoned.

The turtle industry is simplicity itself: so soon as one advances sufficiently inland a couple of niggers rush out and turn her over and lug her into the tank, when her laying days are over, for it is the female only that is captured as she comes to deposit her eggs, and no human eye has ever seen nor any alderman ever guzzled amid the green fat of the male animal.

Ascension is best described as the most God-forsaken spot in creation, except perhaps Aden, to which must be given the palm. Here the naval garrison seem to have grown into a mechanical routine, and only change their monotonous wading through sand by an occasional day's leave to Green Mountain, on whose summit the only three blades of grass on the island struggle for existence. How these gallant men are chosen for this dreary duty it is difficult to say; no alien princeling attached to the British Navy ever appears to have his turn; and one must assume that "merit tempered with non-interest" is the qualification that controls the roster. Of the turtle there can be no two opinions; in unlimited supplies, two huge tanks, through which the tide ebbs and flows, contain some hundreds of these delectable creatures, delectable only with the aid of the highest embellishments, but the most nauseous sickening of "*plats*" in the shape of rations. Every man-of-war calling at Ascension is compelled to ship a dozen, which lie for weeks on deck, their heads resting on a swab, and the hose playing on them of a morning, while a stench more insidious than the vapours of a fried-fish

shop attaches itself to everything; one's hair-brush reeks like a turtle fin, and whether one eats, drinks, or smokes, it's *toujours tortue*.

During the Ashanti war, Ascension appeared at its best; in its comfortable hospital the wounded from spear and slug, and the dying from West Coast fever, obtained the best of attendance. In it I saw Thompson, of the Inniskilling Dragoons, just brought down from the Prah—one of the most popular men in the Army—die; whilst from it many a brave man has been carried to his last home, and many a sufferer who has entered its portals in apparently the last stage of fever and ague has been pulled round, and put on board with renewed life to return to England to bless the surgeons and curse Ascension.

It was on my return home in '69 that I met old Toogood (whom everybody knew) at Aden—who, rushing up to me, whispered, "Come along, I've secured a carriage," and following with that glee that all who have crossed the Desert will appreciate, I was horrified to find he had all his bundles in the quarantine carriage.

"Great heavens," I exclaimed, "do you know what this means?" and he hardly gave me time to explain the pains and penalties before he was in full cry after the rascally Egyptian guard, who, realising he was dealing with a novice, had accepted a sovereign for placing him in a carriage by himself.

In those long-ago days—and possibly still—every train had a quarantine carriage, entering which meant vigorous isolation till fumigation had taken place, and "even betting" that one's cabin in the trooper at Cairo would have remained vacant homeward bound.

When the Japanese were airing their aspirations at becoming the great naval power they now are, I witnessed one of their virgin attempts at navigating a warship under the control of British officers. Confident of their ability, and fretting to show what they could do, they one day insisted on landing their instructors and assuming temporary control of the ship. The development was not long in coming. Away flew the ship, in graceful circles round and round the bay, when suddenly a dashing manœuvre beyond the comprehension of the most enlightened observer, and, lo! she was steaming full speed for the shore. Within the hour she was well wedged on a sandy bottom, and a tidal wave not long after having considerately lifted her a few hundred yards higher up, the hull

was converted into an hotel, and for years gave ocular proof of Japan's first triumph in navigation. That was in the later sixties, when Togo was still in the womb of futurity.

In those long-ago days, Yokohama had not attained its present respectable civilisation; top hats were sought after as the daintiest of fashionable attainments; every battered specimen on board fetched its weight in gold; open baths for mixed bathing were to be met with in the public thoroughfares; British regimental guards disarmed fanatics before allowing them to enter the town; inlaid bronzes, miniature trees, and genuine curios were procurable; massive Birmingham products had not become an industry wherewith to catch the unwary; public crucifixions by transfixing with bamboo stakes (such as I witnessed in the case of the murder of a British officer) were still in full blast, and the sweetest little girls were to be bought for domestic service, and sent to be dealt with by the nearest magistrate on the breath of a suspicion of breach of fidelity. To go a mile beyond the Treaty Port was to court certain death, whilst to remain peacefully within the town and visit the various day and night entertainments was as delightful an existence as the most blasé reprobate could desire.

CHAPTER XXI.
THE GUILLOTINE AND MADAME RACHEL.

On one of my numerous visits to Paris a notorious poisoner—Le-Pommerais—was awaiting execution by the guillotine.

I am not of a cruel disposition, but I confess that certain sights afford me a morbid gratification, the more so as I know that one witness more or less can in no way affect the victim, who, in nine cases out of ten, is dazed, despite the bravado that is sometimes assumed.

I had seen Müller and the pirates hanged in London, and a man "garrotted" at Barcelona; I had seen two soldiers shot at Bregenz on the Lake Constance, and now for the first time in my life I was within measurable distance of the Place de la Grève, where the most hideous drama, accompanied by all the pomp that a dramatic nation can introduce, was to be enacted one morning. But what morning? There was the rub, for the French are nothing if not original, and whilst permitting the unhappy victim to drink and smoke and play cards till 2 a.m. ruthlessly rouse him a couple of hours later, and roughly proceed to prepare his toilette.

Inquire as I did, nobody could give me the day, and although on more than one occasion I had driven to the accursed spot and waylaid officials likely to know, their replies were invariably the same; nobody knew, nobody cared, it would be time enough when the fateful morning arrived, and then *voilà*; a rush of two powerful men on a defenceless, trussed fellow-creature; a shove with unnecessary violence on to a plank, a strap or two unnecessarily tight to secure the unresisting wretch; a jerk and a flash of burnished steel; a quivering trunk, and a head squirting blood yards high, and the handful of sawdust, and the roar of a delighted

multitude as “Monsieur de Paris” leisurely proceeds to light a cigarette, and within five minutes the whole ghastly paraphernalia has disappeared within the gloomy parallelograms of La Roquette.

Terrible as all this sounds, is it not less terrible than the secret executions indulged in by our own merciful laws? There at least excitement must for the time hold the victim till the supreme moment arrives, whilst here the granite walls, the grim officials, the parson mumbling prayers, divest the function of everything but strict officialism, which to the culprit must indeed be the very bitterness of death.

When the name of Count La Grange was more familiar to English ears than it is in these forty years later days, it was my delightful privilege to know—if not the redoubtable Count himself—a fair and important member of the distinguished sportsman’s family circle. I had, indeed, seen “Waterloo avenged” at Epsom in the June of 1864, when Gladiateur left the field miles behind; but it was only in the following autumn that I made the personal acquaintance of the goddess who professed a kind of allegiance to the sporting Frenchman, and re-avenged, as it were, the vengeance that had been meted out to my country the previous summer.

I was in Paris under the wing of Bob Hope-Johnstone, the terrible major, whose dislike was a thing to be avoided, and whose blow, as a certain bric-à-brac pair of Israelite brothers once discovered to their cost, was like the kick of a horse. We had dipped pretty freely into the delights of that most delightful of cities, when, sipping our coffee one evening on the terrace of the Café de la Paix, we were transfixed—at least, I was—by what appeared a heavenly being stepping out of a brougham. In those benighted days a brisk trade was done in the “Cabinets particulier” that extended over the upper floors of the historical café, and night after night the best men and the loveliest women of the Third Empire resorted thither by battalions and indulged in every delight that the best of cookery and the best of wines never failed to stimulate.

An obliging *maître d’hôtel* had informed me who the lady was, and possessing a reserve of assurance, since happily simmered down into a reserved and retiring disposition, I sent up my name without further ado

and craved permission to pay my homage. It would be absurd and nauseous to repeat the beautiful phrases one poured into the ear of a being who, if alive now—which is doubtful—has probably not a tooth in her head; suffice to say she was a superb écarté player, and initiated me into the rudiments of the game. It seemed marvellous to me that such a goddess should strive so laboriously to overcome in me the violation of every canon of the game, but in those long-ago days I was fair of hair and of a ruddy countenance, and the coincidence may not have been so extraordinary after all. Often of an afternoon I visited her hotel in the Bois de Boulogne, and it was only when La Grange was known to be in Paris that my going in and coming out was in the least circumscribed.

Sitting at a table, with his blubber lips lingering over a glass of absinthe, was our old acquaintance, "Jellybelly," who, noticing the late Duke of Hamilton and Claud de Crespigny within hail, bellowed out, "Will your Grace tell me the French for crab, I feel itching for one at dinner?" and on being told a species—not of the sea—shouted in his purest Franco-Houndsditch, "*Garsong, apporty moir un morphion rôti*."

As the police have lately been somewhat in evidence over the commission as to whether they are as corrupt as some people consider them, an instance of over-zeal that occurred long ago will, I trust, be laid to heart in future criticisms.

Lord Chief Justice Cockburn and his boon companion, Serjeant Ballantine, once witnessed an act of unnecessary brutality towards a female in the Haymarket.

"Why this unnecessary violence, my man?" inquired the amiable Sir Alexander.

"Mind your own business, or I'll show you," was the reply of the zealous constable, and within a trice the female was forgotten and her two champions found themselves in Vine Street.

"Name," inquired a priggish inspector of the Lord Chief Justice, and on being informed, he added: "No doubt—we've heard this kind of thing before."

"Yours," he continued, addressing the great serjeant. "Quite so," he added, on being told, and nothing but the entry of an official who

recognised them prevented the two great legal luminaries from spending a night in the cells.

As every one is aware, neither of these distinguished men were saints, but they respected the ordinary laws of humanity, and did not admit that every poor wretch who had stooped to folly was the legitimate target for kicks and cuffs and lying testimony.

Although a leap into the seventies is necessary, the sensation that the so-called “Great Turf Fraud” caused must excuse a brief reference to it. It was in 1877 that an old lady with ample means conceived the brilliant idea of adding to her income by speculating on the Turf. Her choice of colleagues, however, was not a happy one, and before long she was led blindly by a genius known to posterity as Benson. Amongst his staff was a brilliant phalanx, the two brothers Carr, Murray, Bates, and the inevitable solicitor, one Froggatt.

A house in Northumberland Street, since pulled down, was where these worthies matured their plans, and by the irony of fate, in the very next house lived Superintendent Thompson, of Bow Street, who, astute as he was reputed to be, was oblivious of the cauldron that was simmering for months under his very nose.

It was in the suitable month of April—possibly the first—that the old lady (Madame Goncourt) opened the ball by paying out in driblets £13,000. When the sum rose to £40,000 she became sceptical, and took her first sensible step and consulted a lawyer.

At this point the police came on the scene, and again the genius of Benson appears, for he, grasping the situation, bought up certain Scotland Yard inspectors who, for a consideration—and a large one—undertook to warn the chief culprits how and when danger was to be avoided.

Consultations in Northumberland Street were now deemed risky, so the venue was changed to the “Rainbow Tavern” (now known as the “Argyll”), a pot-house abutting on Oxford Street, and there the original conspirators and their solicitor, augmented by Inspectors Druscovitch, Meiklejohn, and Palmer, arranged for telegrams and other details to defeat the ends of justice.

The commonplace sequel will suggest itself to most people. Benson, the two Carrs, Bates, and Froggatt were sent to penal servitude for fifteen and ten years respectively. Later on Benson "peached" on his police allies, who in November were tried, Druscovitch and Meiklejohn receiving two years each, and Palmer being acquitted.

Madame Goncourt, it may be added, was still without her profits.

After his fifteen years, Benson was currently supposed to have burst out as the director of numerous shops in the metropolis, where electric appliances for the instant cure of gout and inhalers warranted to contain "compressed Italian air" and to make everybody a Patti or a Mario were to be had for a guinea; whilst a further guinea entitled the purchaser to a consultation with the specialist.

This, however, did not last long, and Benson ended his career shortly after by throwing himself over the balustrade of an American gaol.

Surely never was a commonplace affair dignified with such a high-sounding title! 'Twas the novelty that did it.

Where one voracious old woman existed in the seventies, the twentieth century could produce a dozen, and where two policemen were caught accepting blackmail, a battalion exists to-day, only their tactics have marched with the times, and instead of receiving their levies in pot-houses, they secrete themselves in cupboards and receive "hush money" from alien brothel-keepers. At the same time, they affect the sorry appearance associated with badly cut frock-coats and brimless tall hats. The boots, however, beat them.

Very few of the *dramatis personæ* appear to be left.

Druscovitch for some years was employed as a Strand hotel detective. Meiklejohn may occasionally be seen, unkempt and down-at-heel, in the vicinity of mediocre saloon bars (glasses only), and Madame Goncourt has long since explained to the Recording Angel that though she was the first, she certainly won't be the last, who has missed the certainties that go begging on the Turf.

But the sixties were celebrated for a much more amusing and widespread example of human credulity and vanity than the humdrum so-called "Turf frauds," with their unsavoury, commonplace ingredients

of a voracious old woman, a bevy of sharpers, and a file of flat-footed police-inspectors.

It was in 1868 that London heard that a divine being was amongst them, coming no one knew whence, and whose age no one could guess, gifted with the power of arresting Time, restoring youth and beauty, and ready—for a consideration—to impart these blessings to all who sought her aid.

It was in the narrowest part of Bond Street that the goddess pitched her tent, and to say that the traffic was impeded would convey but a poor idea of the congestion that retarded locomotion in that worst-built of thoroughfares. Old men desirous of enamelling their bald old pates, ponderous females with scratch wigs and asthma, and girls, pretty and ugly, with defects capable of improvement, hustled and tussled to pay the fee of the wonderful enchantress who guaranteed to restore youth to old age and make one and all "beautiful for ever."

Madame Rachel was a bony and forbidding looking female, with the voice of a Deal boatman and the physique of a grenadier. The robes she affected when receiving her clients, and the crystals and gimcracks that clattered at her girdle, might well inspire awe, as, emerging from behind massive curtains, she approached her victim with some phrase suggestive of "knowing all about it," which, indeed, was part of the system when time and opportunity permitted, or the status of the client justified it.

Rachel rarely smiled; when she laughed—which was rarer still—it was the laugh of a rhinoceros. Assisting her was a beautiful girl, of the *beauté du diable* type, with the suspicion of a cast in one of her heavy-lashed eyes, which made her more bewitching than ever.

"How old do you think my daughter?" once inquired the arch-impostor of a man from whom I had it direct. He having replied "Seventeen," she turned to the siren with, "Tell this gentleman, my child, what you saw during the French Revolution, and how I took you to see the execution of Marie Antoinette."

And then "Alma," coached to perfection, turned her bewitching eyes as if peering into eternity, and began a string of twaddle that ought not to have deceived a Bluecoat boy.

Everybody consulted Madame Rachel. If a youth got a black eye at young Reed's sparring rooms (at the "Rising Sun" in Whitehall) it was in Bond Street he was made presentable for any fashionable function in the evening, and in every conceivable walk of life one met evidence of the universal sway of enamel; whilst nightly at the Opera, Rachel and her daughter occupied a box on the grand tier and surveyed the battalions of old men and old women, youths and maidens, who had passed through their hands.

But despite Alma's charms, she had a narrow squeak of being implicated with her mother in the prosecution that followed later on—instead, however, she was taken in hand by Lady Cardigan, and made a success in Grand Opera. But her troubles were not yet over, and aspirants to her heart and hand (enamelled and otherwise) were in considerable evidence nightly at the Opera house in Paris.

It was at the hands of one of these she met her fate. Carried away by jealousy or scorn, he shot her from the stalls, though, happily, not fatally. After this she disappeared, but not before displaying a magnanimity that was refreshing in the reputed daughter of the flint-hearted Rachel, for she refused to prosecute her assailant, who escaped with a nominal imprisonment.

A controversy afterwards ensued in the daily Press as to the becoming height of female dress; some advocated up to the shoulder, others below, some a tape, some nothing; but the important question has not yet been set at rest, and never will be, despite County Council edicts in the name of propriety, or the hypocrisy and flunkeydom that stalk over the land.

Alma in all her glory had her own ideas, and appeared invariably and literally in "semi-nude."

Years after she was recognised by a former adorer at the Concordia Music Hall in Constantinople, but all the *beauté du diable* had vanished; the cast still remained, but failed to ravish—Nature had worked through the enamel with which her skin had been saturated, and Alma pure and simple remained—a living example of how "Time turns the old days to derision."

Madame Rachel's experiences were of a more prosy description, and, prosecuted a few years later by a Mrs. Pearce—said to have been a

daughter of Mario's—whose jewels she had annexed in addition to a considerable sum, she was relegated to five years' penal servitude.

But the most amusing incident has yet to be told, although it seems incredible that even so foolish a woman should court publicity by joining in the prosecution. The report of the trial in any old paper of the period will convince the most sceptical of the absence of exaggeration in this ungarnished recital.

Mrs. Borrodale was a frivolous old lady of some forty years, whose wealth, vanity, and frequent visits to Bond Street marked her out as a desirable client to the astute Rachel.

"You've won the heart of a great lord," was her greeting one day, "who desires to see you in your natural beauty."

Mrs. Borrodale, having first blushed through her enamel, was not long in consenting, and having stipulated for a subdued light, and that the "view" should be through a curtain, proceeded to be enamelled from head to foot. On a given day she posed in all the beauty of her birthday suit, and Lord Ranelagh, who was the reputed admirer, peeped through a slit in the tapestry—and, let us hope, then fled.

His lordship, it may be added, eventually died a bachelor. The very title is extinct, and the enamelled old Venus never assumed a coronet. After this, the old sinner was known as "Peeping Tom," and the foal by a thoroughbred stallion of repute, Peeping Tom (which, however, never attained any position on the Turf), was christened Ranelagh.

Incredible as it may appear, this silly old woman capped her indiscretion by joining in the prosecution instituted by the stockbroker's wife, and so published to a gaping world what might have better been left to the imagination.

Rachel has, it is currently reported, two sons at the present moment practising as solicitors under high-sounding names, who not long ago wriggled out of a nasty case by the skin of their teeth, whilst their less acute Christian colleagues suffered the penalty attendant on blackmailing.

But the Rachel establishment was by no means the only type that flourished in the long-ago sixties by pandering to human frailty, and the premises occupied by Madame Osch, situated at the corner of Piccadilly

and St. James's Street—and now, like Babylon, with not one stone standing upon another—could have told some curious tales of wards in Chancery and Hebrew jewellers, and of Tommy and John, and of how Tommy was arrested as he started for Monte Carlo, and how John, smelling a rat, evaded ill effects; but the recitation would only bore a twentieth-century reader, for human nature then is the same nature as now, and what flourished then in one shape still flourishes in another, and the only reflection worthy of consideration is that, if these things were done in the green tree, what is being done in the dry?

CHAPTER XXII.
REMINISCENCES OF THE PURPLE.

THE death of the Duke of Cambridge recalled many instances of the kindly nature of the old warrior. Abused and ridiculed by the ignorant and unwashed for actions—more or less imaginary—that he was supposed to have been guilty of in the Crimea, it is established on the testimony of eye-witnesses that no man showed more personal bravery at Inkerman than the late illustrious Duke. Oblivious to danger, and literally wandering in and out amongst the dense masses of Russians, he seemed to bear a charmed life, and if on any occasion he selected an umbrella—which is by no means admitted—what greater proof of absolute indifference to danger? As well might one accuse Fred Burnaby of cowardice for confronting the Dervishes in the Soudan with a simple blackthorn. But royalty has its penalties as well as its advantages, and if the grandson of George III. was subject to intense excitement verging on delirium under exceptionally trying circumstances, let us be fair, gentlemen, and give the bluff old warrior his dues.

In the zenith of his career, so unable was his Highness to refuse almost any personal request, that it was found necessary to chain a bulldog of the most pronounced Peninsular type on the very threshold of the Commander-in-Chief's office.

For this service General MacDonald was selected as military secretary, and any one who had the capacity of passing his meshes was enabled to present himself at his Royal Highness's next levée.

These functions were divested of all formality; an extension of leave, a request to go to the depôt, an application to join the service companies, was invariably more successful if preferred personally, and "Well, sir, what is it?" with a kindly shake of the hand saved many a heart-burning

and protracted filtration through a dozen departments, usually ending in a snub.

Seated in the room was his aide-de-camp—the solitary specimen in uniform. Colonel Fraser, V.C., had commanded for years the celebrated "Cherry-bobs" (11th Hussars), and if a little unsociable whilst in actual command, the mannerism had entirely disappeared in the courteous mouthpiece of the Duke.

Gazing one afternoon on the placid features of the "Royal George" before the new War Office, the occasion on which he once visited a station not 100 miles from London and told the colonel and officers generally that he didn't believe a word they said, and stamped and fumed and swore and threatened, came vividly to my mind. There had been a fracas in the canteen during the officers' mess hour, which eventually developed into a riot, and then was quelled. No one in the mess-house appears to have heard it, and it was only next morning that the matter, after investigation, was reported to the Horse Guards. The "Royal George," who was distinctly apoplectic, ran many such chances of combustion in his younger days, for the old warrior was by no means mealy-mouthed and was not above playing to the gallery, as represented by the Press, and although he could never aspire to rank with General Pennefather, he could, when circumstances demanded, swear like any trooper.

It was the 11th that Lord Cardigan brought to such a wonderful state of perfection and for the command of which he had paid upwards of £20,000 over regulation. It was in the 11th that the fire-eating Colonel shot a captain of his regiment dead in a duel, and only saved his commission by his overwhelming interest. It was a regiment in which every private was dressed and redressed at his Captain's expense as if his uniform had been made by Poole, and where the overalls and sleeves were so tight that one marvelled how officers or men ever got in or out of them.

What a beautiful regiment it was in the old sixties. And one felt it was a national crime to send such troops to India. But all that, alas! is long since changed; the Pimlico Clothing Works, economy, and paternal letters to *The Times* have done the rest; and the abolition of purchase, the breech-loader, and the new type of British officer have completed the

inauguration of the “slops” period, and abolished once and for ever well-dressed regiments and *esprit de corps*.

Whilst on this delicate subject memory suggests many presumptuous reminiscences.

When Prince Alfred was a supernumerary Lieutenant of the *Racoon*, what an ideal brick he was! Scraping on a fiddle, myself at the piano, and Arthur Hood (lately become Viscount Bridport) with a brass instrument of deafening intensity, what harmonious discord has not shaken the rafters of the old Casemates at Gibraltar; and when the Prince seated himself at the piano and sang “In ancient days there lived a squire,” one forgets the retiring potentate that eventually ruled over Gotha.

It was on one of these occasions that during a lull in the festivities a steady tramp outside was wafted to our musical ears, and going out to discover the cause, I was horrified to see an elderly gentleman, ablaze with decorations, in evening attire, who, with numerous apologies, was conducted into the room.

He was in fact the Duc d’Alençon’s equerry, who had honoured the private concert with his presence, and for the past hour had sat a transfixed witness of our marvellous harmony. At this time the *Racoon* was commanded by Count Gleichen—a nephew of the late Queen’s—who once happened to be on the P. and O. at the same time as myself, both returning from leave to Gibraltar.

In those days life on a P. and O. was a mass of enjoyment: youngsters joining their regiments, old officers—naval and military—returning from leave, the ship’s officers, all joined nightly in harmless jokes, and as lights were put out and the steward’s room closed, each roysterer ascended to the upper deck and songs and what-not ensued. No one entered into the revelry more than Count Gleichen, as, with a tumbler of contraband grog, he quaffed and laughed as only a British sailor can.

Years later, when the Duke of Edinburgh commanded the *Galatea*, he still remembered his musical colleague, and a pretty snake ring with a turquoise in the head that he presented to me was lost in an accident that nearly cost me my life.

Boating has never been my forte, and in endeavouring on one occasion to enter a boat, it drifted with the impact, and, with one leg on the jetty and another in the boat, I soused into six feet of the muddiest "old Mole" water. Eventually I was hooked out, more "mud than alive," but the ring was gone, and still reposes in the turgid waters of the Mediterranean.

Amongst the ship's officers was Lord Charles Beresford, at the time the most inveterate Fourth Lieutenant of practical jokers. After a function at which the Duke and the ship's company were on one occasion present, the local Inspector-General of Police, who had deemed his presence necessary, was staggered next morning by shouts of laughter as he peacefully slumbered in his bungalow.

Rushing to the window, conceive his horror on seeing Charlie Beresford, in his full uniform, strutting about and giving words of command in imitation of the original. But he was a bumptious buckeen, and no one sympathised with his discomfiture.

When the King was doing his goose-step at the Curragh, it was my high reflexed privilege to be doing mine in the next lines.

It was during this season that a march for the whole division was ordered to Maryborough, twenty-two miles distant.

The Prince, who was attached to the Grenadiers, accompanied us to and fro, and even after the fatiguing march might later on have been seen in the streets of Maryborough, accompanied by "his governor," General Bruce, as if nothing unusual had occurred. It was lamentable the effect it had on those splendid types of humanity, the 1st Grenadiers, and their superb "Queen's Company," every man six feet and upwards. But the misfortune can hardly be laid to their charge; suddenly transferred from their sweet pastures in London, what wonder that the good things they had revelled in should seek an outlet on the dusty plains of Kildare! And so it came to pass that every ditch contained a guardsman, and long before the twenty-two miles had been covered every ambulance in the division was filled by the warriors.

The Vansittart family in those long-ago days were represented by some interesting scions.

"The Croc," in many ways perhaps the most unique, was a remnant of a past generation who adapted surroundings to modern requirements, and was the terror of gouty old members who dined before four when "table money" came into force, consumed a loaf in a sixpenny bowl of soup, and drank their beer for nothing.

"Pop," on the other hand, was of the highly-refined class, had a flat in Paris, and only occasionally flashed upon London immaculately clothed in ultra-fashionable attire. But the gem of the family was the dear old Admiral, who combined apparently the better points of "The Croc" and "Pop" in his own weather-beaten person. At the time I knew him he was in command of the *Sultan*, and had the reputation—in conjunction with Admiral Hornby—of being the highest authority on ironclads. But what brought him into notice was a combination of fearless seamanship and bluff loyalty whilst in command of the *Hector* that convoyed the Prince of Wales from Canada. For days the weather had been rough till, coming up Channel, Vansittart hailed a fishing smack, and possessing himself of the pick of the last haul, bore down upon the *Serapis*. Attached to her yard-arm was a basket, and as the spars of the two frigates literally rattled against one another, down dropped the offering at the feet of the heir-apparent.

No greater exhibition of nerve and seamanship can well be conceived; had the manoeuvre resulted in accident no explanation would have satisfied "my lords," for a nasty sea was running and sea room was advisable, however commendable the motive. It was an action worthy of association with Sir Harry Keppel sailing out of Portsmouth Harbour in sheer devilry with every stitch of canvas set, and showed Admiral Vansittart as in every way worthy of being bracketed with that grand old bluejacket of the past.

The man who commanded the *Galatea* and afterwards the *Sultan*, was a very different person to the lieutenant of the *Racoon*, and genial and adventurous as he once was, the captain soon developed into a morose and unpopular commander.

On board the *Galatea* was the pick of the Navy, whilst the social addenda associated with the supposed requirements of Royalty were represented by the present Lord Kilmorey, Eliot Yorke, Arthur Haig, and sprigs of nobility, "interest," and nonentity. Of the two equerries Eliot

Yorke's forte may best be described as of the delicate type; so delicate, indeed, that it may be left to the imagination. Arthur Haig, on the other hand, was of the firm and reliable sort—a reasonable proportion of "suaviter" with a superabundance of the other thing. It was he whose daily duties included an epitome of the events of the day, intended for no eyes but those of the Queen, and carefully included in every "bag" that left the ship. Haig, in short, had been nominated by the Queen, and was the only man on board of whom the Prince had a wholesome dread. Eliot Yorke, on the other hand, was the selection of the Royal Alfred. Not that the Prince was without his appreciation of a practical joke, and when a fat old gentleman that had been specially invited to a farewell lunch at one of the foreign stations suddenly discovered that the ship was under way and a jump into the bumboat imperative, no laugh was heartier nor louder than that of the Royal joker.

The Duke, it was said, was one of the best commanders of an ironclad; he had the technique at his fingers' ends, and knew every bolt and screw from the keel to the upper deck; some toadies even asserted he was superior to Hornby or Vansittart, and was a typical British tar in the truest acceptation of the term. His sympathies, as I have heard him assert, however, were German to the backbone, and his eyes would fill with tears when singing some guttural sonnet of the Vaterland. His marriage brought things to a head, and the curtain was rung down on Lardy Wilson and all other workers of iniquity after the garden party at Clarence House in honour of his wedding.

With an excellent piper like Farquharson, engaged to combine grooming and boot cleaning with occasional pibrochs and reels, it may be accepted that H. R. H. was a thorough believer in the precept that "it is more blessed to receive than to give."

His proficiency as a musician was another fable, and though he "graciously condescended" to be first violin at the Albert Hall Orchestral Society (founded by himself), uncharitable people are known to have asserted that the royal bow was soaped. But a point on which no two opinions can exist was the questionable taste he displayed on one occasion when entering Simon's Bay. Every commander, as is well known, is bound to salute the commodore's flag after taking up moorings; but the Prince had run up the Royal Standard—and so the commodore had to salute first. Etiquette demanded that this should be

done—after, and not before—and the “reports” that followed ended as might be expected, and the good old sailor was shelved, and a scandal hushed up that some attributed to von-Kümmel and others to less potent causes.

It was the most beautiful woman of the day in the long-ago fifties—the Empress of the French—that introduced the diabolical “appanage” known as the crinoline to conceal her “interesting condition,” and the peg-top heels that followed as a consequence, to give height to the unpleasant beam the crinoline involved on the wearer, were answerable for more accidents, *faux pas*, and unpleasantries than any combination of female adornments before or since.

Once at St. Peter’s, Eaton Square, whose incumbent was known as Saint Barnabas, a fair worshipper was noticed still in a devotional attitude when the rest of the congregation had settled down to the fashionable discourse their souls thirsted for, but the posture continuing, the verger delicately approached, and found that nothing more serious had occurred than that her heels had caught in the hoops and that she was unable to move a peg. The hopes of an advertisement over a fashionable proselyte were thus shattered, and his reverence resumed his theme.

On another occasion, returning from Cremorne at 2 a.m., when every cab had been taken, my attention was attracted by a handsome young cavalier tenderly supporting a fair sinner, who was leaning trustfully on his shoulder. It appears he had found her motionless and in tears on an area grating, her heel through her hoop, and the heel itself wedged as in a vice. Nothing but prompt action could save the situation, and the last I saw of the interesting couple was progressing by easy stages and heading towards Oakley Square.

The same young cavalier might have been recognised not long since as a grim old warrior, munching a sandwich in the vestibule of Stafford House after the levée in honour of the Mutiny heroes!

And the charming lad who was responsible for the introduction of the diabolical appendage. We all remember the shock that literally smote every heart when the news of the Prince Imperial’s untimely death reached England.

A youth divested of every suspicion of affectation, possessing to an inordinate degree that fascination of manner rarely to be found except

amongst the old nobility of France, discarding every comfort to fight in the ranks of an alien army, to be assegaied by a handful of Zulus! Was ever such irony of fate for the great-nephew of Bonaparte, who, had he lived, would assuredly by his charm have eventually won back his throne.

One voice only struck a discordant note, the overrated Quaker Solon of Rochdale. "Perish India," he once said in his wisdom. "He went out to kill the Zulus, and the Zulus killed him" was this time his funeral oration.

It was in the early seventies—if I remember rightly—that I had many acquaintances amongst the various embassies and legations, which frequently brought me to the St. James's, the club of the foreign attachés generally. My most intimate friend was Baron Spaum—at the time naval attaché at the Austrian Embassy—and at the present moment Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Austrian Navy. I was also familiar with Prince Hohenlohe and Count Mongela, of the same embassy, and, in a lesser degree, with Count Beust, son of the Austrian Ambassador. Amongst the Russians I knew Count Adelberg well, and it was through his representations that I eventually came into contact with that wonderful man Count Schouvaloff. Count Paul Schouvaloff at the time was Russian Ambassador in London. An intimate and trusted friend of the Czar, his Excellency had filled every office in his country that called for administrative and diplomatic talents of the first order. As Chief of the Secret Police his power was literally absolute and irresponsible; as governor of a vast province he had ruled almost as an independent sovereign; and in later years was the ruling spirit—and certainly the most difficult nut to crack—at the Congress of Berlin, when Lord Beaconsfield was accredited with having returned with "Peace with Honour."

It was as the guest of this historical personage that I one day found myself at Chesham House, eating the most delightful lunch, drinking the rarest Crimean wines, and marvelling at the courteous, retiring-mannered man who plied me with the most delicate attentions.

His English, as may be supposed, was faultless, and so it was that my admiration was turned to astonishment when a personage to whom I assumed there could be nothing new under the sun asked me if I would

do for him the great favour of piloting him amongst the sights of London.

Not many nights later a muster of some dozen souls paraded at my rooms in Charles Street, and as all were scrupulously attired in pot hats and shooting coats it would have been difficult for the most observant to have sorted ambassadors or attachés from the less diplomatic clay made in England.

The muster roll contained the Russian Ambassador, Count Adelberg, Count Beust, Count Mongela, Baron Spaum, Prince Hohenlohe, Colonel (Charlie) Norton, Sir Edward Cunynghame (Ned), the Duke of Hamilton, and my humble self.

The programme had been settled prior to all this with the assistance of an ex-detective, who made a princely addition to his slender pension by piloting exploration parties to latitudes where much depended on diplomacy.

Our first visit was to Turnham's, a pot-house in Newman Street, where extensive arrangements had been made for some badger drawing under the personal auspices of Bill George. In later years this canine authority developed into a trusted dog-provider to the nobility, and resided in the vicinity of Kensal Green; at the time of which I write his transactions in dog-flesh were of a more miscellaneous character, and, as he once told me with pride, a letter addressed "Bill George, Dog Stealer, London," would reach him without delay.

Our next move was to Jimmy Shaw's, but whether it was to Windmill Street or to a new house he took when his old place was demolished (next to the stage door of the Lyric Theatre) I cannot recollect.

Here rats in sackfuls were awaiting us, amongst others a rough-haired mongrel terrier, which not long previously had performed the astounding feat of killing 1,000 rats in an incredibly short space of time.

To see 1,000 sewer rats not long in captivity together in a pit, after having seen each one counted out by an expert rat-catcher diving into a sack, is something my enlightened twentieth-century reader will never again see in London.

For, although not absolutely prohibited, the shadow of Exeter Hall was already spreading over the land, and the police—already tainted—

were not to be trusted, even when a live ambassador was present.

Tom King—ex-champion—had also consented, for a consideration, to again put on the gloves, and brought with him a burly opponent; the slogging that ensued was really splendid, and Count Schouvaloff was literally in ecstasies.

Our next move was to Endell Street, and here greater precautions were necessary, for cock-fighting was the unpardonable sin, and the pains and penalties terrible. So we split into twos and threes, and going by different ways eventually found ourselves in the cock-pit below ground.

Tom Faultless was the last of the old type of British bulldog sportsman. Over seventy years old, he had in his youth assisted at bull-baiting, dog-fights, cock-fighting, and every sport that once gave unalloyed delight to high and low.

To his able hands the conduct of this particular department was entrusted; nor were we long in realising that the supply was more than enough to meet the most extravagant demands, as, banging the door to, we were assailed by the defiant crows of a dozen gladiators, and this not far from midnight, when the denizens of that virtuous quarter were courting gentle sleep, and sounds carried like steam whistles.

It was close upon 2 a.m. before we again resumed our pilgrimage, and with the aid of half a dozen four-wheelers wended our way towards the Mint.

It is unnecessary here to repeat what is fully set out in a previous chapter, suffice to say our experiences on this occasion were equally as interesting of those of ’62, and that his Excellency vowed that amid all his miscellaneous experiences nothing so unique had ever equally delighted him.

Five o’clock was striking as we drove past Covent Garden, and having suggested that excellent eggs and bacon were to be obtained at Hart’s Coffee House, all alighted and all ate as only diplomatists and night birds can.

As we drove still further West the strings of market carts wafted the odours of country life and green things into our debauched nostrils, and

we slunk away to our respective homes more or less delighted with our adventures.

Whilst on the subject of Russian diplomatists a deafening experience I had a few years later may not be without interest.

It was on the Grand Duke Alexis's flagship that I had the honour of finding myself one of some sixty guests. In addition to the Russian battleship there were men-of-war of England, France, and Sweden in the harbour, and the Grand Duke was presiding at the table.

Needless to describe the excellent cookery—for Russian cookery is very difficult to beat—nor the choice Crimean wines, many of which are unobtainable except at the Imperial table, but when the dinner was over the row *literally* began.

First the Grand Duke proposed the Czar's health, smashing the glass so that no less worthy toast should again defile it, and 101 guns began a salute on the deck immediately over our heads.

Barely had it ceased when the battleships of England, France, and Sweden followed—not simultaneously, but one after another—and again the Grand Duke arose and proposed the Queen of England to a repetition of the same diabolical accompaniment. And then followed the toast to the rulers of France and Sweden till the viands we had consumed seemed to rattle in their astonishment, and our heads to whirl with after-dinner loyalty.

And when the adjournment to the main deck for coffee and cigarettes took place, it is no exaggeration to assert that we waded ankle deep through broken glass.

The impetus given to that industry must have been enormous!

CHAPTER XXIII.
DHULEEP SINGH—AND FIFTY YEARS AFTER.

We must pass back to the fifties to introduce a personage who figures conspicuously in the sixties and seventies, both in comedy and tragedy, and then shuffled off this mortal coil and has long since been forgotten.

It was in ’56 when England had annexed Oude, that the ex-Queen and a considerable retinue arrived in London to “protest”—a process that must have enlightened, if it did not benefit, them in the ways of Imperial Policy.

Half-a-dozen houses in Marylebone Road were secured as a temporary palace, and it was thither, as a lad, that I accompanied my father, who had once held high office in the Punjaub.

The exact spot was where the Baker Street station now stands, and as one is nothing unless one is accurate, conceive entering the present dismal premises and finding in the “reception room” two or three beds, in one of which was the Queen; about the floor various courtiers were littered, whilst the atmosphere was so sour that one felt thankful the old woman’s reign had been cut short, and that henceforth sanitary arrangements, a tub, and other adjuncts of Christianity would prevail in Oude after the family had realised that “No mistakes were rectified after leaving the counter,” and that “Don’t you wish you may get it?” embodied our beneficent policy in the abstract.

Baker Street at the time swarmed with Mohammedans, for, by a coincidence, Lord Panmure, the Earl of Dalhousie, and Sir John Lawrence—all more or less associated with India—had houses in that then fashionable neighbourhood, and so enabled the “protesters” to

combine business with pleasure at comparatively slight physical inconvenience.

Dhuleep Singh, another reputed Punjaubee, had also at this time been brought to England, and, although then pursuing the ordinary course of a schoolboy under General Oliphant, it was only later, as a Norfolk landlord, a masher, a burlesque conspirator, and the owner of the finest emeralds in the world, that he came into prominence.

It is in these latter roles that we purpose to interest our readers.

During the minority of this most fortunate Asiatic the savings out of his annuity of £40,000 a year had amounted to a colossal sum, and so Dhuleep Singh first comes into prominence, on attaining his majority, as a Norfolk squire and the owner of Elvedon Hall.

An excellent shot, it was some few years later that he made the sportsmanlike wager with Lord Sefton to slaughter a thousand head of game within a day. Rabbits were included in the bet, and impossible as such a feat may appear, the tameness of the pheasants in the over-stocked home preserves made it quite feasible. For some reason, however, it never came off.

At this period the Maharajah was in high favour at Court; his children, after his marriage with the unpretentious little lady he wooed and won at Singapore, were permitted to play with British Royal sprigs, and the Heir-apparent invariably had a week's shooting with his dusky neighbour and a suitably selected party in the autumn.

But despite the glamour these reunions may be supposed to have spread over him Dhuleep Singh had ever an eye to business, and a contract was made with Baily, the poulterer in Mount Street, for a shilling a head all round for all surplus hares, rabbits, pheasants, and what-not slaughtered at Elvedon Hall.

The Maharajah's behaviour meanwhile was all that was desirable. At Court functions he was resplendent in emeralds and diamonds, and the slab, six inches by four, on his swordbelt was said to be the finest emerald in the world.

The jewellers to whom was deputed the task of cutting, setting, and otherwise improving the barbaric gems of the youthful prince are said to trace their present Bond Street position to this fortunate selection.

It was only when his Highness assumed evening dress that visions of Mooltan, Chilianwallah, and Goojerat faded from one's brain, and a podgy little Hindoo seemed to stand before one, divested of that physique and martial bearing one associates with either warriors or Sikhs, and only requiring, as it were, a chutnee-pot peeping out of his pocket to complete the illusion.

During the sixties and seventies Dhuleep Singh was in evidence everywhere. An excellent whist player amongst such admitted champions as Goldingham, Dupplin, "Cavendish" (on whist), and others, he was to be found every afternoon at the Marlborough, or East India, or Whist Club backing his opinion, and damning his partner if he ignored his "call for trumps;" whilst every evening found him at the Alhambra graciously accepting the homage of the houris in the green-room, and distributing 9-carat gimcracks with Oriental lavishness.

During this period apparently the Punjaub occupied only a secondary position in his mind, and we next find him occupying a spacious flat in King Street, Covent Garden, and it was there, doubtless, that visions of charging at the head of the splendid horsemen of the Punjaub and the wresting of India from British rule first entered his romantic brain; for the Maharajah was a poet, though happily none of his effusions appear to have been preserved. He may also have recollected that the Koh-i-noor was once a crown jewel of Runjeet Singh, and his Highness was passionately found of baubles.

Often have I seen him of an evening pacing to and fro outside the "Shirt Shop" (as the Whist Club was affectionately called) maturing those foolish plans that deprived him of his income for a while and led him into straits that it is painful to realise. Occasionally, indeed, he would rave at the injustice of the beggarly income the Government of India accorded him, and then it was he conceived the brilliant idea of coquetting with Russia for the simultaneous rising of the Punjaub and a Russian invasion of India.

Not that one Sikh would have stirred at his call, and his proclamation fizzed and went out like any squib at a Brock benefit. Added to this, Russia rucked on him and his Highness fell into disgrace.

But still his vanity led him on, and he essayed to start for India, and shipped as Pat Casey, though why Pat, and what part of Ireland Casey

hailed from will ever remain an unfathomable mystery.

The hero, however, never got beyond Aden, where he was politely invited to retrace his steps. The “last phase” was as brief as it was lamentable. Settling in Paris he again married. Then poverty necessitated the sale of his jewels, sickness overtook him, and, broken in body and mind, he asked and received pardon for his many foolish acts.

After his escapades in Paris he is said to have written to the British Government, “*Capivi*,” evidently intending to reiterate the cypher telegram attributed to Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Scinde, “*Peccavi*” (a mot that will appeal to all classical readers). Thereupon he was forgiven, and shortly after he died, and so the race of the “Lion of the Punjaub” went out like a lamb.

What became of the second wife I never heard, what became of the Alhambra lass and the dusky tadpoles that drove about the King’s Road at Brighton history does not tell, for “Love is a queer thing, it comes and it goes,” and all that remains to the present generation is the nebulous tale of a misguided man who kicked down wealth, position, and a happy old age in the reckless pursuit of a silly ambition.

FIFTY YEARS AFTER.

I cannot permit this opportunity to pass without reminding every reader of the momentous issues that were for ever set at rest by the incredible heroism of our army during the Mutiny in September fifty years ago, and without encroaching on the beautiful story by W. H. Fitchett, within the reach of everybody for 4½d., one may legitimately ask why many incidents that then occurred have never been explained.

What is the *true* version of the “*Stone* Bridge” being left *open* at Lucknow?

Why is it invariably confused with the “*Iron* Bridge?”

What was the *true* reason of the Cawnpore reverse?

No history yet written has ever explained these points, which, however justifiable at the time, may surely, after fifty years, have light thrown upon them, and if Lord Roberts would give his version, many—including the old brigade—would have their curiosity set at rest.

And touching those glorious days, what return has a grateful (!) country made to the remnant that remains? An invitation to a levée and a sandwich and a photographed group afterwards! A 5th Class Victorian Order would have left nothing to be desired. For my part if I pass a drummer boy of the brave 93rd I feel an irresistible inclination to raise my hat in homage to a successor of those invincible Highlanders. And then the irony of it! MacBean, the adjutant who passed through those continuous hurricanes of shot and shell without a scratch, died of lock-jaw, when in command of the regiment some twenty years after, from cutting a corn.

Every patriot will forgive a digression on the day (December 6th) these lines are being written, for it is a landmark in the annals of the Army as recording the *last* occasion (fifty years ago) that British infantry advanced in line in old Peninsular formation—in slow time—halting periodically and dressing on their coverers as we see on a Hyde Park parade, under a terrific fire of shot and shrapnel, and then, breaking into the old-fashioned charge, the irresistible cheer, and cold steel as a climax.

For on that decisive day the Gwalior contingent, 80,000 strong, splendidly drilled, the flower of the Sepoy Army, was shattered by Colin Campbell and his handful of 3,400 men, and the neck of the great Mutiny was broken.

No man living to-day who heard that crumpling sound and that avenging cheer can ever—will ever—forget it, and it behoves you, my masters, to remember, when you see the red and white-striped ribbon on the mendicant selling matches, or his more fortunate comrade patrolling outside a shop door, that in the words of Colin Campbell: “Every man of them that day was worth his weight in gold to England.”

And here one is reminded of a German prejudice of the Dowager Queen Adelaide (whom we all prayed for in our youth), who at levées and Court functions insisted on kilted officers appearing in “trews”—the absence of the “breeks” being too shockingly shocking.

And whilst on this subject I am reminded, by the recent death of George FitzGeorge at Lucerne, of many incidents more or less military.

At Gibraltar as late as ’65 was a sentry posted on a promontory that originally commanded a view of the Straits—but which a high wall had

subsequently obliterated—whose orders were “To keep a sharp look out and immediately to report if the Spanish fleet was in sight.”

The Governor at the time was Sir Richard Airey, the most courteous of the old English school of gentlemen, but probably the worst Quartermaster-General that ever permitted boots and blankets to accumulate at Balaclava and brave men to freeze and starve at the front. It was an inspiration of his to utilise the stores with which Gibraltar is permanently provisioned by a periodical issue of salt pork rations that had accumulated since the Crimean War. Needless to add, much was mouldy, and many the complaints, and on one occasion when a vehement report reached him, he replied: “Leave it here, it shall be seen to.” Not long after invitations were issued for a dinner at the Convent, to which the “Board” on the rotten pork were invited.

The banquet was the finest a French cook could produce, and one dish with “*Sauce Robert*” especially appreciated.

“That, gentlemen, is your rotten pork, and shows you how some men are never satisfied,” was his Excellency’s appropriate (!) comment. But there is not a *cordon bleu* in every regimental cook-house.

CHAPTER XXIV.
THE LAST OF THE OLD BRIGADE.

I WILL now relate as a fitting end to these long reminiscences what I witnessed forty years ago in the island of Mauritius, when death was having a fine harvest by the ravages of a plague, and how a hurricane—terrific in even that so-called focus of hurricanes, and compared with which the storms we occasionally encounter in Merrie England are but gentle zephyrs—obliterated all the germs of infection.

It was in ’67 that a terrible epidemic—new to science—burst without warning on the beautiful island of Mauritius. Its very symptoms were unfamiliar to the faculty, and so, for a better name, it was called jungle fever. Fever and ague were its chief characteristics, followed by absolute prostration, and death with alarming rapidity.

Like its dread ally cholera, its first appearance was irresistible; then the attack became less formidable, and as the atmosphere became saturated with its poisonous germs, every living thing suffered from exhaustion, and man and beast literally dragged one leg after another, and almost prayed for release.

The scourge, it was supposed, had been introduced by the 100,000 Madras coolies who worked on the sugar plantations under conditions as nearly approaching slavery as our beneficent Government would admit.

It was under these depressing circumstances that a British regiment, 800 strong, and in the best of health, was landed, and within a month not 100 would have been available for duty. Not daring to keep them in Port Louis, where the deaths were some 400 a day, the regiment was split into fragments and billeted wherever an empty outhouse or a few obsolete tents could afford temporary shelter. But the ingenuity of the inefficient staff in no way averted the danger, and within a month a dozen minor

centres were created, where British soldiers succumbed and died who ought never to have been disembarked.

Not an officer who was sufficiently well but had to read the burial service almost daily over Protestant and Catholic comrades, and not a drum was heard whilst the scant ceremony was being repeated and repeated in its terrible monotony.

To make matters worse quinine, which ordinarily costs a few pence, was selling at auction at £30 per ounce. Then the supply ran out, and so valuable did the drug become that the dose a dying man's stomach could not retain was carefully bottled up for the next urgent case.

Soon the very wood for coffins ran short, and the carpenters who made the ghastly necessaries were themselves dead or dying, so long trenches were improvised in which the dead were laid in rows.

Every house bewailed a departed relative, for there was no pitying angel to sprinkle the door-posts in that remote isle of the sea, and the sound of wailing went up from Indian compound and European cantonment alike as, smiting their breasts, the cry ascended to Brahmah and the God of the Christians to stay the hand of the destroying angel.

Truly the grasshopper had become a burden and desire failed, when a change as sudden as the arrival of the terrible scourge ensued, and a hurricane, unprecedented in its violence, swept over the island for days.

Fields of sugar cane, ripe for the sickle, were laid low in a twinkling; houses were unroofed, and tents blown into space; huge bridges were twisted like corkscrews, and bolts weighing a ton were hurled about like cricket balls. A heavily-laden goods train, standing outside the station (as instanced by the Governor in his official report), was turned on its side, and, joy of joy, the terrible plague and its insidious germs were wafted into eternity. And when the death roll was called a few months later, what a cloud of victims did it show! Bishop Hatchard, not long arrived, whose funeral I attended; the General, who came home to die; the wives and daughters of many it is needless to recapitulate, and brave soldiers innumerable discharged as medically unfit or still sleeping in that distant oasis of the Indian Ocean.

But even this awful drama has associations that lend themselves to comedy. A representative of a Deep Sea Cable Company, who was

conspicuous for his flowing mane and superabundant hair, emerged from his illness as smooth as a billiard ball, and the local snuff-coloured wig he donned to hide his nakedness was as bewildering as it was irresistible.

The coolies, too, desirous of apprising their friends in Madras of their safety, and thinking it a favourable opportunity to defraud the Revenue, would slip unstamped letters into the post, oblivious of the columns of names that appeared weekly in the local paper as not having been forwarded in consequence of insufficient postage. And then the Creoles —a snuff-and-butter combination of English, French, and Indian— desirous of airing their European pretensions, would hail one with: “Ah, the plague—we are now far from IT,” or, anxious to be polite, would add: “I have heard your name with great advantage.”

Sitting round a blazing fire some few years ago at Christmas, in the comfortable chambers (since demolished) at the corner of Hanover Square and George Street, three friends were discussing the various changes they had witnessed together in the past forty years. Not that the conversation was unattended with drawbacks, for a gang of “waits” were disseminating discord through the still hours of the night. An asthmatic harmonium was the chief culprit, and bore on its back the blasphemous inscription, “Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord,” the remainder of the orchestra being a clarionet and a fiddle; all the operators had red noses, and the instruments suffered accordingly. A public-house within measurable distance may explain the welcome silence that occasionally intervened and justify the assumption that it was responsible for the discord.

Be that as it may, “The voice that breathed o’er Eden”—with whisky variations—does not lend itself to concentration of thought or deed, save of an irreverent kind, so I will conclude by describing my companions whom we’ve frequently met in our various rambles.

Of these, one was a country-looking squire with grey hair and cropped beard, who, on closer inspection, was recognisable as the wiry bruiser who had thrashed the “Kangaroo” thirty years previously at the Alhambra; the other was Bobby Shafto, still erect and soldier-like, but divested of the curly locks that had won their way into everybody’s favour a decade previously.

For Bobby had only just left the Service, after holding a series of personal staff appointments through the influence of powerful friends of the days of his youth.

So great, indeed, had been his interest at the Horse Guards that—admittedly, the worst of company officers—he was discovered to possess military talents of the highest order. He was “a born leader of men” it was asserted; he had a “capacity for organisation” and for “licking a hopeless rabble into a military force.” Had he continued soldiering he would doubtless have been covered with “orders,” appointed Governor of one of our important fortresses, given the command of an Army Corps, or created a peer—as many an amiable donkey with interest has been before and since.

But both these good fellows have since passed away, and I—only I—remain—like a modern Elijah—to commune within myself of the various incidents with which we were associated in the long-ago sixties.

THE END.

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