

JOHN ASHTON

GOSSIP IN THE FIRST
DECADE OF VICTORIA'S
REIGN

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Gossip in the First Decade of Victoria's Reign

PREFACE

I have written this Gossip not only for the edification of those to whom a portion, more or less, may be news, but for those who, like myself, have lived through the whole of Queen Victoria's reign, to whom the remembrance of things, almost forgotten, may bring pleasure and excite interest. The items, herein displayed, have been gathered from many sources, and their authenticity is guaranteed by giving the name of the authority whence they were taken, in very many instances *ipsissima verba*, as paraphrasing would rob them of their freshness and individuality. All the illustrations are contemporaneous, and, good or bad, belong to the text and should not be altered.

JOHN ASHTON.

CHAPTER I

The Queen's Accession – Proclamation – Funeral of the King – The Queen and social functions – Mr. Montefiore – Amusing letter – Electric telegraph – Knocker wrenching – Amusements of the young aristocracy.

King William the Fourth was as sincerely fond of his niece, Alexandrina Victoria, as he cordially detested her mother, and he earnestly hoped that she might obtain her majority, which took place on the 24th of May, 1837, before he died, for he had a horror of the Duchess of Kent having even the shadowy power of a Regent. Greville, in his *Memoirs*, writing on 23rd of May, says: "The King prayed that he might live till the Princess Victoria was of age, and he was very nearly dying just as the event arrived. He is better, but supposed to be in a very precarious state. There has been a fresh squabble between Windsor and Kensington about a proposed allowance to the Princess."

The old King lived but a very short time after the desired event, for he expired at 2.12 on the morning of the 20th of June, 1837, and how the sad news was broken to the young Sovereign may best be told in the words of that mine of anecdote, Miss Frances Williams Wynn, the daughter of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn (the fourth baronet):

"On Monday we were listening all day for the tolling of

the bells, watching whether the guests were going to the Waterloo dinner at Apsley House. On Tuesday, at 2½ a. m., the scene closed, and in a very short time the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham, the Chamberlain, set out to announce the event to their young Sovereign. They reached Kensington Palace at about five; they knocked, they rang, they thumped for a considerable time before they could rouse the porter at the gates; they were again kept waiting in the courtyard, then turned into one of the lower rooms, where they seemed forgotten by everybody. They rang the bell, desiring that the attendant of the Princess Victoria might be sent to inform H.R.H. that they requested an audience on business of importance. After another delay, and another ringing to enquire the cause, the attendant was summoned, who stated that the *Princess* was in such a sweet sleep, she could not venture to disturb her. Then they said, 'We come to the *Queen* on business of State, and even her sleep must give way to that.' It did; and, to prove that *she* did not keep them waiting, in a few minutes she came into the room in a loose white night-gown and shawl, her nightcap thrown off, and her hair falling upon her shoulders, her feet in slippers, tears in her eyes, but perfectly collected and dignified."

Lord Melbourne was summoned to Kensington Palace by the Queen at 9 a.m., and a Privy Council was called for 11 a.m., but the notice was so short that several of the Privy Councillors had no time to put on their official costume, and were obliged to attend in undress. Amongst others who made their appearance

at Court in this novel fashion were the Duke of Cumberland (then, by the fact of the King's death, King of Hanover) and Lord Glenelg.

The Queen was proclaimed the next day, but there is no need to detail the ceremony, as we have all experienced a similar scene lately. The existing ministry was retained, and things settled down in their places, yet not quite all at once, for *The Western Luminary*, a paper long since defunct, says, "In one writ which came down to this city, a ludicrous mistake was made in the date, as follows: 'In the year of Our Lady 1837,' instead of 'Our Lord.'" And the Royal Arms had to be altered from those borne by Her Majesty's five predecessors. Being a female, they had to be borne on a lozenge, instead of a shield; the crest of a lion surmounting a crown was discontinued, as was also the escutcheon of pretence bearing the arms of Hanover, surmounted by the crown of that country.

The preparations for the funeral of the late King were at once commenced; and, in connection therewith, I cannot help quoting from *The Times'* Windsor Correspondent (28 June): "In the platform erected for the interment of George IV., there were more than 70,000 superficial feet of boarding, and 49,000 feet of quartering. The quantity of black cloth used for covering the floor of, and the roof over, amounted to more than 10,000 yards. I understand that, after the interment, it becomes the perquisite of the clergy of the chapel, as do, also, many of the decorative ornaments placed on, and suspended over, the

coffin. You will, perhaps, recollect what some people would willingly have you forget – I mean the squabbling which occurred respecting the velvet cushion upon which the coronet of the late Princess Charlotte rested at her funeral, and the scramble which took place for the real or supposed baton of the Duke of York, on the occasion of his burial. Care was taken to prevent the occurrence of any such indecent proceedings at the funeral of George IV., and, hence, I do not anticipate any such scenes on the present occasion.”

The King was buried with great pomp on the night of the 8th of July, the Duke of Sussex being chief mourner, and Queen Adelaide occupying the Royal Closet. At the close of the ceremony, the members of the procession, who were much fatigued by the toil they had undergone and by the sultry heat of the chapel, proceeded to quit as quickly and as quietly as possible, but nothing like order was observed in the return to the Palace. In fact, it was, for a considerable time, a scene of indescribable confusion. Arrangements had been made, by orders of the Earl Marshal, for the places at which the carriages of those who had to take part in the procession were to set down and take up; but, owing to the immense number of the carriages, the ignorance of many of the coachmen as to the prescribed regulations, and the obstinacy of others, the rules very soon became a dead letter, and every man seemed disposed to take his own way. This, as might be expected, caused such confusion that it was long past midnight before anything like order was restored. There

were smashed panels and broken windows in abundance, but no serious accidents were recorded.

The Queen soon had plenty of business on her hands, and on 30th June she gave her assent to forty Bills, one of which (a remarkably short one), the 7 Gul., iv. and i. Vic., c. 23, enacted. "That from and after the passing of this Act, Judgment shall not be given and awarded against any Person or Persons convicted of any Offence that such Person or Persons do stand in, or upon the Pillory." Owing to the recent change in Sovereigns, there were a few slips in "Her Majesty," and "La Reine le veult." On the 13th July the Queen and her mother left Kensington Palace and took up their residence in Buckingham Palace. On the 17th, the Queen dissolved Parliament in person, dressed in white satin, decorated with gold and jewels, wearing the Order of the Garter and a rich diadem and necklace of diamonds. She bore the function remarkably well, although one evening paper said that "Her emotion was plainly discernible in the rapid heaving of her bosom, and the brilliancy of her diamond stomacher, which sparkled out occasionally from the dark recess in which the throne was placed, like the sun on the swell of the smooth ocean, as the billows rise and fall"! On the 19th July she held her first levée, and on the 20th her first drawing room.

Having dutifully chronicled the doings of Royalty, let us do the same by meaner folk. On 24th June, Mr. Moses Montefiore, the celebrated Jewish philanthropist, who lived over one hundred years, was elected Sheriff of London, and, on the 9th Nov.

following, he received the honour of Knighthood. He was the first Jew who ever served the office of Sheriff, or who had been made a Knight, in England.

Of course, there were no Board Schools in those days, and education was somewhat lax, but it will do no harm to note a piece of orthography, which will show the standard at which the middle lower class had then arrived. It is copied from *The Times* of 29 June, 1837. “(From an Evening Paper) – Last autumn, Mrs. C-, of London, during a visit to – House, in the West of Scotland, called one day, along with some other ladies, in the family carriage, at the Golden Arms Inn, of a sea bathing place on the coast, and stopped for about an hour. Some time after the party had returned to D- House, Mrs. C- discovered that she had lost a very fine boa, which she supposed she must have left at the Inn. On enquiry, no trace of the boa could be found; but, about two months after Mrs. C-’s return to London, she received a parcel with a boa somewhat torn, accompanied by the accompanying (*sic*) epistle, which we give as rather a curiosity of its kind: —

“*Golden Arms Inn – 29 Oct., 1836.*

“Mrs. C-, London,

“Madum, – I was sorry to heer that when you lost your Bowa in my huse, that the Bowa was stole by my sarvant lasses; and the sarvants at D- House spred a report against my huses karakter, which no person ever questioned afore. My wiffe, Peggy, was muckle vexed at the report, and

sershed the trunks of all the lasses, but did not find your Bowa; she fund in Jenny McTavish's kist half a pund of tea which Jenny had stole from my wiffes cupboard. Jenny denied taking your Bowa; but not doubting that you would tell a lee, and as Jenny tuke the tea, my wife thocht she must have taken your Bowa too, so I turned off Jeny for your satisfaction. She went home to her mithers house in – , and four Sundays after, wha should be cocken in the breist of the laft, all set round with ribbons in her heed, but Miss Jeny with your Bowa on her shoulders, like a sow with a saddle on its back. I stopped her coming out of the kirk. So So, Miss Jeny (says I) hae ye stumped the cow of her tale, or is this the ladies Bowa ye have on your sholders? The brazen faced woman had the impudence to deny the Bowa was yours, and said her sweetheart had bot it for her in a secondhand shop in the Salt Market of Glasgow. But I cut matters short wi' Jeny; I een, as if by your authority, tuke the law in my own hand, and tore the Bowa from her sholders; it was torn a little in the scuffle wi' Jeny and me afore the congregation in the kirk yard, but I carried it off in spite of her, and now send it to you, hopping you will put a letter in the newspaper of Lunden cleering the karacter of me and my wiffe Peggy, and my Inn of the Golden Arms. As for Miss Jeny ye may mak her as black as auld nick, for over and above Peggies half pund of tea, and your Bowa, Jeny (I hae good reason to believe) is no better than she should be. I am, Madum, your vera humbel sarvint,

“John – .”

It will hardly be credited that at the commencement of

1837 there was only one railway running out of London, and that was the Greenwich railway, which, however, only went as far as Deptford, where it deposited its passengers in the midst of market gardens, leaving them to walk or ride to Greenwich. But there were several running in the midlands (six railways in all England), and what was then called "The Grand Junction Railway," from Liverpool to Birmingham, was opened on the 4th July of this year. Cognate with railways is the practical working of the Electric Telegraph, now so necessary to their being. On 12 June, 1837, a patent was granted (No. 7390) to William Fothergill Cooke, of Breeds Place, Hastings, and Charles Wheatstone, of Conduit Street, Hanover Square, for their invention of "Improvements in giving signals and sounding alarms at distant places by means of electric currents transmitted through metallic circuits." This hitherto scientific toy was first tried on 25 July by permission of the London and North Western Railway (then in progress) between Euston and Camden Town stations, and its successful operation was witnessed with delight by Fox and R. Stephenson, amongst many others.

A great feature in this year was the "Tom and Jerryism" (so called from Pierce Egan's "Life in London," 1821) that existed, especially among the upper class of young men. Foremost of all was the Marquis of Waterford, whose delight was in the company of prize fighters, *et hoc genus omne*, and whose idea of amusement consisted in visiting the lowest public houses, and treating everybody with liquor, even pails full of gin being

distributed to whoever would partake of it – being never so happy as when the debauch ended in a fight. Knocker wrenching and similar pranks were his delight, and *Punch*, at the very commencement of vol. i., gives a suggestion for a monument to him. His pranks would fill a volume, and in August of this year (during a yachting trip), whilst at Bergen, he received a blow on the head from a stalwart watchman that nearly killed him.

Here is a specimen police case. *Times*, 10 July, 1837:

Bow Street. – On Saturday (8th July) three persons were brought before Mr. Minshull, charged with twisting knockers off hall doors, assaulting the police, and other disorderly conduct; and, it having been rumoured that one of the parties charged was the Marquis of Waterford, a great crowd of persons assembled in front of the Office to catch a glimpse of his Lordship. It proved, however, that the gentleman alluded to was not the noble Marquis himself, but his brother, Lord William Beresford, who gave the name of Charles Ferguson. Two other persons were placed in the dock besides his Lordship, one of whom gave the name of Edward Hammersley, of 41, St. James's Street, and the other, who was equipped in the garb of a waterman, said his name was George Elliott, and that he was his Lordship's coxswain.

William Dodds, a police constable of the E division, No. 9, then stated that he was on duty in Museum Street, between 1 and 2, on the previous night, when he saw the two gentlemen at the bar go up to the house, No. 49, and wrench the knocker from the door. Witness expostulated

with them, and, seeing another knocker in the hand of the prisoner Elliott, he took him by the collar, upon which the prisoner Hammersley dropped the knocker which he had just carried off. The prisoner Ferguson then came up, and said, "It's all right, old boy," and offered him money, which witness refused to take. The two gentlemen then ran away, but were soon apprehended, witness still retaining hold of Elliott. They were then conveyed to the police station, where Ferguson refused to be searched, declaring that he would not submit to such a rascally degradation, and, having said so, he struck witness. The prisoners were then locked up.

Mr. William Gibson, of 49, Museum Street, proved that one of the knockers produced belonged to him, and had been wrenched off his street door.

Ferguson, in his defence, said he had been up the river on a boating excursion, and had taken "rather too much wine." The other two prisoners also pleaded having taken a drop too much.

Mr. Minshull observed that there were two charges against Ferguson, whom he should consider as the principal offender, and should fine him £5 for unlawful possession of one of the knockers, and £5 for assaulting the police constable in the execution of his duty. He should not fine the other two.

Ferguson said he had no objection to pay £5 for the knocker, but, as he denied the assault, he should appeal against the fine.

Mr. Minshull informed him that there was no appeal in the case, but he intimated that Mr. Ferguson might go to

prison, if he pleased, instead of paying the fine.

Ferguson: Oh, there's no occasion for that; I shall pay the fine.

Mr. Minshull then desired him to come round in front of the bench, and said to him: "I dare say, Sir, you have money enough at your disposal, but I pray you not to entertain the notion that you can therefore do as you think fit in the streets of this metropolis, either by night, or by day. You were brought before me, recently, for a similar offence, when I fined you £5, and I now warn you, that if you should again appear before me, under circumstances like the present, I shall, most assuredly, feel it to be my duty, not to inflict a pecuniary fine upon you – for that is no punishment to a person in your station – but I shall send you, at once, as I am authorized to do, to hard labour in the House of Correction, and you will then see that neither rank, nor riches, can entitle you to the privilege of committing depredations upon the property of peaceable and industrious persons, or of disturbing the peace and quiet of this town with impunity."

The noble Lord was then handed over to the custody of the gaoler, and his two companions were discharged. It appeared that he had not sufficient money about him to pay the fines, but his brother, the Marquis of Waterford, after visiting him in "durance vile," released him from his ignoble captivity by paying the fines.

On the same day, his brother, Lord James Beresford, was arrested for disgusting behaviour, and two "young men of genteel appearance," who gave false names, were taken in custody by the police for maliciously upsetting a shell-fish stall.

One more illustration of the amusements and behaviour of the *jeunesse dorée* of that period will suffice. *Times*, 25 Nov.

Marlborough Street. – Lord Harley, of Chester Place, Capt. W. E. Reynolds, of Jermyn Street, and Mr. Charles Lushington, of Tavistock Hotel, were on Thursday (23 Nov.) brought before Mr. Chambers, charged with having practised the fashionable amusement of ringing door bells.

Mr. Young, surgeon, Piccadilly, said, about 5 o'clock that morning he was roused by a violent ringing at his bell. He answered the summons immediately.

Capt. Reynolds: It's a – lie. You have committed perjury.

Mr. Lushington (to the complainant): You are a – liar. The fact is, I hurt my fingers and wanted some diachylum plaister, and I therefore rang the bell of the first surgeon I came to. This is the truth. So help me, God.

Mr. Young continued: When he got to the door, he found that all the three defendants had gone away; and he immediately followed them, and demanded their reason for disturbing him. The defendants turned upon him, and made use of language and epithets which he would not pollute his lips by repeating.

Capt. Reynolds (shaking his stick at the witness): I wish I had you elsewhere.

Mr. Lushington: I'd roll you in the kennel, if it was worth while.

Mr. Young continued: The altercation attracted the notice of the police, and witness gave them into custody. When they got to the station house, and witness was

proceeding to make the charge, the defendants repeated their disgusting epithets and language.

It is impossible to do more than to remark that the language was of a description hitherto presumed to be confined to the vilest class of the community.

Mr. Young added that all the defendants appeared to be intoxicated.

Lord Harley: I beg pardon, I was sober.

Inspector Beresford was sworn to the fact.

Inspector: His Lordship was more intoxicated than the others.

Mr. Lushington (falling on his knees, and holding up his hands): I was not drunk this night – so help me, C-t.

The Inspector swore that none of the defendants were sober.

Mr. Lushington: The case shall be carried to a higher court.

Mr. Chambers: Then, to give you an opportunity of taking your case elsewhere, I shall make you all find bail; and Mr. Young, if he pleases, may prefer an indictment against you.

Mr. Chambers asked Mr. Lushington if he was a relative of Dr. Lushington,¹ and received a reply in the affirmative.

Capt. Reynolds said, if his language had been offensive towards the bench, he was sorry for having used it.

Mr. Chambers said, personally, he was indifferent to the language used to him.

¹ Then a very active M.P.; afterwards Judge in the Admiralty and Probate Courts, Dean of Arches, &c.

The parties having left the box, Mr. Young told Mr. Chambers that he had no wish to press the case further. He wished an arrangement could be made, so that the bench could decide the matter summarily.

The defendants were acquainted with this very handsome conduct on the part of the complainant, and, after some discussion, Capt. Reynolds and Mr. Lushington agreed to pay £5 each to a charity.

Lord Harley was fined 5/- for being intoxicated.

When Mr. Chambers was inflicting the latter fine, he said to Lord Harley that he hoped he would exert his influence, if he had any, with some members of the Legislature, to get the fine for drunkenness increased to £1 where the party was a gentleman.

The defendants paid the fines, and went away.

CHAPTER II

Thames Tunnel flooded – First mention of the Nelson column – Moustaches – Sale of the King’s stud – Marriage by Registrar – Commencement of New Houses of Parliament – Lunatics and the Queen – The Queen’s visit to the Guildhall – Lord Beaconsfield’s maiden speech.

Nowadays very little is thought of making a tunnel under the Thames, but the first one, designed and carried out by Sir Marc Isambard Brunel, was regarded, and rightly so, as a most wonderful feat of engineering. One was proposed in 1799, and a shaft was sunk in 1804, but the work went no further. The one now spoken of was approved by Act of Parliament 24 June, 1824, and the shaft was begun and the first brick laid on 2 March, 1825. It suffered several times from irruptions of water; one, on 18 May, 1827; another, in which six lives were lost, on 12 Jan. 1828. In 1837 there were two irruptions, the first taking place on 23 August, and it is thus described by one of Brunel’s assistants: “We were at work about two o’clock on Wednesday, when we found the water coming in faster than usual. At first, we observed a quantity of loose sand falling near the gallery, which changed to thin, muddy drops. This convinced us that the *stratum* in which the men were working was bad, loose soil. The increase of water made it necessary to withdraw the men, which was done by a passage under the crown of the arch, made for their safety in case

of accidents. No injury was sustained by any of the men. I was not satisfied, at the time, of the real extent of the bad soil, and I ordered a boat to be brought, with a rope of sufficient length to enable us to float to the shield. The boat was brought, but the rope attached to it, and by which we were to be hauled into the shaft, was shorter than we had ordered it. This deficiency probably saved our lives. We had not proceeded far in the boat when I perceived, by the twinkling of the lights in the tunnel, and other indications of inundation, that the waters came in with increased rapidity. I then gave the signal to be hauled into the shaft, and had scarcely done so when I observed the ground above give way, and the water descending in a thousand streams, like a cascade, or the Falls of Niagara. We were rescued, but, had the rope by which we were relieved from our perilous situation been of a length to allow the boat to go to the extremity of the tunnel, in all probability we should have been drowned. This happened about four o'clock, and, soon after five, the tunnel was entirely filled. No lives were lost. The only injury done is the suspension of the works. The steam engine, when the leak is stopped, will throw out a ton of water per minute; and, in three days and nights, the whole of the tunnel may be pumped dry."

The second irruption, on 3 Nov., also filled the Tunnel, but on this occasion one man lost his life.

In the *Times* of 9 Sep. of this year I find the first suggestion of a monument to Nelson, in Trafalgar Square:

"Sir, I observe in your paper of Tuesday last, that a

correspondent has commented upon the proposed plan for laying out Trafalgar Square.

“Allow me to suggest through your columns the favourable opportunity and most appropriate situation, now afforded, of erecting in the centre of the Square some worthy trophy, or statue, commemorating the glorious victories of the immortal Nelson. Whilst other great commanders and statesmen are honoured with suitable public monuments to their fame, surely the British nation would be eager, if called on, to pay this tribute to the valour, intrepidity and success of this illustrious hero. Yours, etc. – J. B.”

In those days every man went clean shaven, or only had side whiskers, a full beard being unknown, and moustaches were confined to foreigners and to a few cavalry regiments, so that for a working man to sport them (although now so exceedingly common) would probably lead to derision and persecution, as in the following police case reported in the *Times* of 21 Sep.:

Marlborough Street. – Yesterday, a young man, “bearded like the pard,” who said he was a carpenter employed on the London and Birmingham Railroad, applied to Mr. Rawlinson, the sitting magistrate, for an assault warrant, under the following ludicrous circumstances:

Mr. Rawlinson: What do you want the warrant for?

Applicant: I’ll tell your worship, and you’ll say it’s the most haggrawating and provoking thing as ever was heard on. Veil, then, I goes to my vork, as usual, this ’ere morning, ven one of my shopmates said to me, “Bill, you arn’t shaved

your hupper lip lately.” “Don’t mean it,” says I. “Vy?” says he. “Cos,” I replied, “I intends veering mustachios to look like a gentleman.” “Vell, then,” says he, “as you intends to become a fashionable gentleman, p’raps you’ll have no objection to forfeit half-a-gallon of ale, as it’s a rule here that every workman vot sports mustachios, to have them vetted a bit.” Veil, has I refused to have my mustachios christened, they made game of them, and said they weren’t half fledged; and, more nor all that, they hustled me about, and stole my dinner out of the pot, and treated me shameful, and so I want your advice respecting my mustachios.

Mr. Rawlinson: My advice is, to go to a barber and have them shaved off without loss of time.

Applicant: Can’t part with a single hair.

Mr. Rawlinson: You want to look like a grenadier, I suppose?

Applicant: My granny-dear (God bless her old soul!), she never had such a fashionable and warlike appendage in her life.

Mr. Rawlinson: What business has a carpenter with a quantity of long hair hanging from his lip?

Applicant: The reason vy I vears it is ’cos it’s fashionable, and makes me look like a man of some courage.

Mr. Rawlinson: Fashionable, indeed! I wish, with all my heart, that the fashion was discontinued. Why need an Englishman make a Jew of himself? It is disgusting to see persons strutting through the streets with mustachios, and, sometimes, a fringe of hair round the face and chin, which is dignified by the name of whiskers. As you won’t take my

advice, I can't assist you.

Applicant: Vot! not for striking me on the hupper lip?

Mr. Rawlinson: Then your mustachios must have saved you.

Applicant: No, they didn't.

Mr. Rawlinson: How's that?

Applicant: 'Cos the hair ain't long and thick enough; they're only young 'uns as yet. There was no occasion to strike me.

Mr. Rawlinson: And there's no occasion for you to wear mustachios. You may have a warrant, if you like, but I think you had better not.

The man with mustachios then withdrew.

The late King's stud at Hampton was doomed to be sold, and the sale thereof created something of a sensation. On this subject there is, in a little twopenny weekly magazine, called *The Torch*, 9 Sep., '37 (vol. i., p. 19), a periodical now long forgotten, a poem by Tom Hood, which I have not seen in any collection of his poems. It is a

Petition to Her Majesty for Preserving the Royal Stud at Hampton Court

By Thomas Hood

I

Liege Lady, all the nation's in high dud-
geon that Lord Melbourne's brains should be so muddy
As to advise you sell your royal *stud*,
Which to preserve, should be your royal study.

II

Poor nags you would not in your stable find,
Like cavalry of Evans called De Lacey,
No! I do rather hope your royal mind
Is naturally fond of something racy.

III

Pray, what has Hampton done that you should trounce ill-naturedly its prancers and its sport?

You have a breed of *asses* in the *Council*,

Do keep a breed of *horses* in the *Court*.

IV

His truth who says that you should sell them, fails.

Believe me, Lady liege, he tells a crammer;

You'll set your people biting all their *nails*,

If you put up your horses to the *hammer*.

V

I like these money-turning Whigs, indeed;

Who, into coin, change everything they're able.

You're just installed, and they would sell *the steed*,

It doesn't make me think they're very *stable*.

VI

I daresay they believe they're very knowing,
I think they're close to their official shelves:
And, when they set the horses "Going, going,"
It's nearly time they should be gone themselves.

VII

The nation quite in Hampton Court rejoices,
What! sell its stud of steeds beyond all praise!
Nay, shout the people with indignant voices,
And the stud echoes with a hundred *neighs*.

VIII

Then sell them not, dear lady, I implore ye;
Of tears 'twill set your people shedding floods; —
I tell ye what will make 'em all adore ye, —
Kick out your ministers and keep your bloods!

But Hood must have laboured under a misapprehension, for the horses were the private property of the late King, and his executors had no option but to sell them. It was said that William IV. in his lifetime wished the country to take the stud over, at a valuation, and, after his death, it was offered to Queen Victoria for £16,000. The sale took place on Oct. 25, and there were 80 lots, which did not fetch particularly high prices, the highest being "The Colonel," who was bought, after winning the St. Leger, by George IV. for 4,000 guineas; but the horse broke down after running a dead heat at Ascot in 1831. He only realised 1,150 guineas, and was bought by the auctioneer, Mr. Tattersall. The next highest price given was for "Actæon," which fetched 920 guineas. The total proceeds of the sale was 15,692 guineas.

In October a great change was made in the matter of marriage, which had, hitherto, been a purely ecclesiastical affair, but by the 6 & 7 Gul. iv., cap. 85, Registrars of births and deaths were empowered to marry couples, and it became a purely civil contract. This Act was to have come into force on the first day of March; but a subsequent Act postponed it to the last day of June, and it really only became effective in October. It surprised people by its simplicity, and the gist of the Act is in Section xx.: "And be it enacted, That after the expiration of the said Period of Twenty-one Days or of Seven Days, if the Marriage is by Licence, Marriages may be solemnized in the registered Building stated as aforesaid in the notice of such Marriage, between and by the Parties described in the Notice and Certificate, according

to such form and ceremony as they may see fit to adopt: Provided nevertheless, that every such Marriage shall be solemnized with open doors, between the Hours of Eight and Twelve in the Forenoon, in the Presence of some Registrar of the District in which such registered Building is situated, and of Two, or more, credible Witnesses; provided also, that in some Part of the Ceremony, and in the Presence of such Registrar and Witnesses, each of the Parties shall declare:

“I do solemnly declare, That I know not of any lawful Impediment why I, A. B., may not be joined in Matrimony to C. D.’

“And each of the Parties shall say to the other:

“I call upon these Persons here present to witness that I, A. B., do take thee, C. D., to be my lawful wedded Wife [or Husband].’

“Provided also, that there be no lawful Impediment to the Marriage of such Parties.”

The old House of Commons was destroyed by fire on 16 Oct., 1834, and it was not until September, 1837, that the first contracts for the commencement of the construction of the new works, in connection with the present building, were entered into. They were for the formation of an embankment 886 feet in length, projecting into the river 98 feet further than that then existing, to be faced with granite, and a terrace 673 feet long next the river, and 35 feet wide, in front of the new Houses, with an esplanade at each end 100 feet square, with landing stairs from the river 12 feet wide. The whole surface of the

front building was to be excavated, and filled in with concrete 12 feet thick, thus forming a permanent and solid foundation for the superstructure. Towards the end of this year, the Queen was somewhat pestered with lunatics. On Nov. 4, as she was going through Birdcage Walk on her return from Brighton, a man of respectable appearance went near the Queen's carriage, held up his fist, and made use of most insulting language towards Her Majesty and the Duchess of Kent, declaring that the Queen was an usurper, and he would have her off her Throne before a week was out. He was afterwards arrested, and turned out to be Mr. John Goode, a gentleman of large property in Devonshire, who had been previously in custody on 24th of May (Her Majesty's birthday) for creating a disturbance and forcibly entering the enclosure of Kensington Palace. He was taken before the Privy Council, and when examined, declared that he was a son of George IV. and Queen Caroline, born at Montague House, Blackheath, and that, if he could but get hold of the Queen, he would tear her in pieces. He was told to find bail, himself in £1,000, and two sureties of £500 each; but these not being forthcoming, he was sent to prison. On entering the hackney coach, he instantly smashed the windows with his elbows, and screamed out to the sentinels: "Guards of England, do your duty, and rescue your Sovereign." He was, after a very short imprisonment, confined in a lunatic asylum.

The other case was a German baker, but he only uttered threats against the Queen and her mother, and he, too, was put

in an asylum.

A great event, and a very grand sight, was the Queen's visit to the City of London on 9 Nov., when Alderman Cowan inaugurated his mayoralty. The Queen went in State, attended by all her Court, her Ministers, the Judges, etc. The procession started from Buckingham Palace soon after 2 p.m. and reached Guildhall about 3.30.

The interior of the Guildhall was "exceeding magnificent." There was a canopy of carved gilt, with draperies of crimson velvet and gold fringe and tassels, its interior, being also of crimson velvet, was relieved by ornaments in silver and a radiated oval of white satin with golden rays. The back was fluted in white satin, enriched with the Royal Arms in burnished gold. The State chair was covered with crimson velvet with the Royal Arms and Crown, with the rose, thistle and shamrock tastefully interwoven.

At each end of the Hall, the walls were covered with immense plates of looking-glass. The window at the eastern end of the Hall, above the throne, having been removed, a gigantic wooden framework was substituted, on which was erected a gorgeous piece of gas illumination. Above the mouldings of the windows, and over the City Arms, waved the Royal Standard and the Union Jack. Above was the Royal cypher, V.R., in very large characters, surmounted by the appropriate word "Welcome," the whole being encircled by an immense wreath of laurels, which terminated, at the lower extremity of the framework, with the rose, thistle and shamrock. Over the clock at the western end,

and reaching nearly the whole breadth of the Hall, with Gog and Magog on the right and left, was placed an immense stack of armour, with upwards of 30 furled flags as an appropriate background. Immediately above was the magnificently radiated star of the Order of the Garter, surrounded by crimson drapery, and the scroll "God save the Queen" entirely composed of cut glass, which, when lit up, seemed, literally, one continued blaze of diamonds. The whole was surmounted by the imperial crown and wreaths of laurel, intermingled with the rose, thistle and shamrock, covering the entire outline of the window. Where, formerly, was the musicians' gallery, on the opposite side, was occupied by three stacks of armour; complete coats of mail were, likewise, suspended in other parts of the Hall; two knights in complete armour guarded the entrance of the Hall and Council Chamber, which latter was fitted up for the Queen's reception room, and hung throughout with crimson fluted cloth, finished with gold mouldings and festoons of red and white flowers. Upon a platform stood a chair of state, splendidly gilt and covered with crimson velvet, and there was no other chair nor seat of any kind in the apartment. The Queen's retiring-room was the Aldermen's Court, and was superbly decorated, having a magnificent toilet table covered with white satin, embroidered with the initials V.R., a crown and wreath in gold, and looped with gold silk rope and tassels.

After the Queen's arrival at the Guildhall, and having spent some little time on her toilet, her Majesty was conducted

to the Council Chamber, where – seated on her throne, and surrounded by Royal Dukes and Duchesses, etc. – she listened to a dutiful address read by the Recorder, and, at its conclusion, she was graciously pleased to order letters patent to be made out conferring a baronetcy on the Lord Mayor and knighthood on the two Sheriffs, John Carroll and Moses Montefiore, Esquires, the latter, as before mentioned, being the first Jew who had received that honour.

At 20 minutes past 5 the Queen entered the Hall, in which was the banquet, wearing a rich pink satin dress, ornamented with gold and silver, a splendid pearl necklace, diamond earrings, and a tiara of diamonds. She occupied the centre of the Royal table, having on her right the Duke of Sussex, the Duchess of Gloucester, the Duchess of Cambridge, Prince George of Cambridge and the Duchess of Sutherland; and on her left, the Duke of Cambridge, the Duchess of Kent, the Princess Augusta of Cambridge and the Countess of Mulgrave. As a specimen of the magnificence of this banquet, it may be mentioned that at the Royal table the whole of the service was of gold, as were the candelabra, epergnes, soup tureens, cellarets, etc.; one firm furnished gold plate for the Queen's table and sideboard to the value of £115,000, and another firm nearly the same amount, whilst the value of plate lent by various gentlemen was assessed at £400,000, besides which there was the Civic plate. The china dessert plates at the Queen's table cost 10 guineas each, and all the glass decanters and china were specially made for the

occasion.

At 20 minutes past 8, the Queen left the Hall, and in her retiring room was served with tea from a splendid gold service made for the occasion, and she reached Buckingham Palace about half-past 9 – highly delighted with her entertainment.

There is nothing more of interest in this year, if we except the maiden speech of Lord Beaconsfield, in the House of Commons, which took place on 7th Dec. Mr. Disraeli (as he then was) had the disadvantage of following O’Connell, in a noisy debate on the legality of the Irish Election Petition Fund. He was not listened to from the first, and, in the middle of his speech, as reported by *Hansard*, after begging the House to give him five minutes, he said: “He stood there to-night, not formally, but, in some degree, virtually, as the representative of a considerable number of Members of Parliament (*laughter*). Now, why smile? Why envy him? Why not let him enjoy that reflection, if only for one night?” All through his speech he was interrupted, and this is its close, as reported in *Hansard*. “When they recollected the ‘new loves’ and the ‘old loves’ in which so much passion and recrimination was mixed up between the noble Tityrus of the Treasury Bench, and the learned Daphne of Liskeard – (*loud laughter*) – notwithstanding the *amantium ira* had resulted, as he always expected, in the *amoris integratio*– (*renewed laughter*) – notwithstanding that political duel had been fought, in which more than one shot was interchanged, but in which recourse was had to the secure arbitrament of blank cartridges – (*laughter*) –

notwithstanding emancipated Ireland and enslaved England, the noble lord might wave in one hand the keys of St. Peter, and in the other – (*the shouts that followed drowned the conclusion of the sentence*). Let them see the philosophical prejudice of Man. He would, certainly, gladly hear a cheer from the lips of a popular opponent. He was not at all surprised at the reception which he had experienced. He had begun several things many times, and he had often succeeded at last. He would sit down now, but the time would come when they would hear him. (*The impatience of the House would not allow the hon. member to finish his speech; and during the greater part of the time the hon. member was on his legs, he was so much interrupted that it was impossible to hear what the hon. member said*).”

CHAPTER III

Destruction of Royal Exchange – Sale of the salvage – Spring-heeled Jack and his pranks – Lord John Russell's hat.

As a sad pendant to the Civic festivities at the close of 1837 comes the destruction by fire of the Royal Exchange on the night of the 10th of January following.

It was first noticed a little after 10 p.m., when flames were observed in Lloyd's Coffee Room in the north-east corner of the building, opposite the Bank, the firemen of which establishment were soon on the spot, as well as many other of the metropolitan engines. But, before any water could be thrown upon the building, it was necessary to thaw the hose and works of the engines by pouring hot water upon them, as the frost was so very severe; so that, by 11 p.m., all Lloyd's was a mass of flame. Nothing could be done to stop the conflagration, it having got too great a hold, and great fears were entertained that it would spread to the Bank and surrounding buildings, the which, however, was fortunately prevented. The Lord Mayor was present, and a large body of soldiers from the Tower assisted the Police in keeping the crowd away from the immediate scene.

It must have been a magnificent sight, and somewhat curious, for amidst the roar of the flames, and until the chiming apparatus

was destroyed, and the bells dropped one by one, the chimes went on pealing “There’s nae luck about the house,”² “Life let us cherish,” and “God save the Queen.” The fire was not completely got under until noon the next day, but, practically, the building was destroyed by 5 am., and, so bright was the conflagration, that it was visible at Windsor – twenty-four miles off, and at Theydon, in Essex, a distance of eighteen miles; whilst from the heights of Surrey on the south, and Highgate and Hampstead on the north, the progress of the fire was watched by crowds of people.

The following account of the Exchange after the fire is taken from the *Times* of 13 Jan.:

“Yesterday afternoon the ruins of the Exchange were sufficiently cooled to allow the firemen and a party of gentlemen, amongst whom we noticed the Lord Mayor, Mr. Alderman Copeland, several members of the Gresham Committee, and other persons connected with the mercantile interest, to inspect them. In consequence of the loose fragments of stone work belonging to the balustrades and ornamental parts of the building being covered over with ice, the difficulty of walking over the ruins was very great, and the chief magistrate fell more than once, receiving sundry bumps. The lofty chimnies standing appeared to be in such a dangerous condition, that they were hauled down with ropes, to prevent their falling on the people below. The iron chests belonging to the Royal Exchange Assurance Company could be distinctly seen,

² It is said that this was the last chime rung.

from the area, inserted in the walls. Ladders were raised, and they were opened, when it was discovered that their contents, consisting of deeds and other papers connected with the Company and their insurances, were uninjured. This afforded much satisfaction to the directors. Another iron safe, belonging to Mr. Hathway, whose office, under the tower, was consumed, which was also in a recess in the wall, was opened at the same time, and a considerable sum in francs and bank-notes was taken out.

“The walls of the west wing of the building, which seemed to bulge outward, were shored up in the afternoon, and they are not, now, likely to fall. Cornhill presented a most desolate appearance, the shops, from Finch Lane to the termination of the street near the Mansion House, were all closed, and the place presented a deserted and desolated appearance; which, contrasted with the bustle hitherto observed during business hours, and the sight of the ruins, forced very unpleasant reflections on the mind. Barriers were placed at the Mansion House end of Cornhill, and across that part of the street between Finch and Birchin Lanes, and no person was allowed to pass except the firemen and persons on business. All the avenues leading to Cornhill were also blocked up in like manner; and, at each barrier, police officers and ward constables were placed to prevent people passing. Various schemes were devised, by numerous individuals, to pass these barriers, and sums were, occasionally, offered to the police to be allowed to visit the ruins, but without effect. The City police kept the thieves away by their presence and activity, and the conduct of the

people was, yesterday, very quiet, forming a contrast with the disorder got up by the swell mob on Thursday last. Those who viewed the ruins at a distance appeared to wear an air of melancholy, and no fire has occurred, for centuries, which has caused more universal regret.

“On searching the ruins under the Lord Mayor’s Court Office, the great City seal was picked up, with two bags, containing £200 in gold, uninjured. On this discovery being communicated to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, it caused much gratification, it having been rumoured that the Corporation would lose their Charter by the loss of the seal, but we did not hear it explained how this could be.

“Owing to the great body of fire underneath the ruins at the north-east angle of the Exchange, it was impossible for the firemen to ascertain, until a late hour, whether any injury had been done to Lloyd’s books, which were deposited in a large iron safe inserted in the wall. Two engines had been playing on it during the latter portion of the day. In the presence of several of the Committee it was opened, when it was discovered that the fire had reached the books, and partially consumed them. In the drawers were cheques on the Bank of England to a large amount, and also Bank of England notes to the amount of, it is said, £2,560. The notes were reduced to a cinder, and, on the drawers being opened, the air rushing in on the tender fragments blew them over the Exchange. They were, however, very carefully collected, and the cinders of the notes were, with much trouble and caution, put into a tin case, which was taken to the Bank, and the words ‘Bank

of England,' with the numbers and dates, were distinctly traced. The amount will, in consequence, be paid to the owners. From what information could be obtained from the gentlemen who took possession of the box, and who were understood to be underwriters, it was the usual custom of the secretary not to leave any money or notes in the safe, but to deposit the money in the Bank, which was done on the evening the fire took place. The money and notes above mentioned, and which were found in the safe, belonged to a subscriber who, on the afternoon of Wednesday, asked permission to deposit his money in the safe until the next day, which was acceded to by the secretary. Some idea may be formed of his state of mind on arriving at the Exchange on the following morning, to see it on fire, and he was in a state of distraction until the finding of the cinders of the notes yesterday, which has, in some measure, calmed his feelings. The underwriters are severe sufferers, having left sums of money, to a large amount, in their desks, which, no doubt, will never be recovered.

“During the confusion on the discovery of the fire, in removing some books from a room in the north-east corner, in addition to £500 in Bank of England notes, which were taken to St. Michael’s Church, twenty sovereigns, in a bag, were thrown out of the windows. The bag broke, and the sovereigns rolled about the pavement; they were all picked up by the mob, who appropriated them to their own use.

“It is firmly believed that the overheating of the stoves caused the disaster which the nation has now to deplore. Wednesday was an exceedingly cold day, and large fires had

been kept up from morning till night in the building. There is no doubt the fire had been spreading, to some extent, in Lloyd's rooms, long before it was seen in the street. Some few months back, two watchmen were on the premises all night, but, on the miserable plea of economy, they were discharged, and the sacrifice of one of the finest buildings in the Kingdom has been the consequence. We believe that most of our cathedrals and large public buildings are left without watchmen during the night, and we hope that the fate of the Royal Exchange will bring about a change in this respect."

The merchants, who used to congregate "on 'Change," were accommodated in the Guildhall, and the members of Lloyd's met at the Jerusalem Coffee House – but these arrangements were, afterwards, modified. The Royal Exchange Insurance Coy. took Sir James Esdaile's house, in Lombard Street.

Times, 4 Ap., 1838: – "The Royal Exchange. – Yesterday, the first day's sale of the materials of the Royal Exchange took place. It produced nearly £2,000. The porter's large hand-bell (rung every day at half-past four p.m. to warn the merchants and others that 'Change ought to be closed), with the handle consumed, and valued at 10/-, was sold for £3 3/-; the two carved griffins, holding shields of the City arms, facing the quadrangle, £35; the two busts of Queen Elizabeth, on the east and west sides, £10 15/-; the copper grasshopper vane, ³ with the iron upright, was reserved by the Committee; the alto relievo, in artificial stone,

³ Still in use on the Royal Exchange.

representing Queen Elizabeth proclaiming the Royal Exchange, £21; the corresponding alto relievo, representing Britannia seated amidst the emblems of Commerce, accompanied by Science, Agriculture, Manufactures, etc., £30; the carved emblematical figures of Europe, Asia, Africa and America, £110. The sale of the remainder of the materials, etc., it is understood, will take place in about a month.”

In the Mansion House Police Court, on 10 Jan., the Lord Mayor announced that he had received five letters relative to an individual who was going about the metropolitan suburbs frightening females to such an extent that they were afraid to go out at night, as they were met by a man, who, under different disguises, would suddenly appear before them, and as suddenly disappear with terrible bounds, which earned him the name of “Spring-heeled Jack,” and he inspired such terror, that the recital of the victim had to be taken with caution. Whoever he was, or why he so acted, was never known, as he was never taken; but, certainly, robbery had no part in his escapades, for he was quite content with paralysing the poor women with fright.

The first facts I can gather about Jack are at the latter end of 1837, at Barnes, where he appeared as a large white bull; at East Sheen he was a white bear; he then visited Richmond, and after having terrorised that town, he went to Ham, Kingston and Hampton, where he was clad in brass armour, with large claw-like gloves. Teddington, Twickenham and Hounslow were all visited by him, and at Isleworth we hear of him wearing steel

armour, in which he seems to have been attired when seen at Uxbridge, Hanwell, Brentford and Ealing. At Hammersmith he took the form of a huge baboon, and as such was seen in the moonlight, dancing at Kensington Palace, ever and anon climbing over the forcing houses. He varied his localities frequently, one day being at Peckham, another at St. John's Wood, and anon at Forest Hill.

This about brings up to the time of its being mentioned by the Lord Mayor, the consequence of which was that a Committee was formed at the Mansion House for the purpose of receiving subscriptions and deciding upon the best means of capturing this erratic genius. Probably feeling that he had sufficiently terrorised the districts before mentioned, he turned his attention to the East end of London, and particularly favoured Bow. A case is given in the *Times* of 23 Feb. A gentleman named Alsop, living between Bow and Old Ford, appeared before the police magistrate at Lambeth Street (then the Thames Police Office) accompanied by his three daughters, one of whom stated that at about a quarter to nine o'clock on the evening of the 21st February, 1838, she heard a violent ringing at the front gate of the house, and, on going to the door to see what was the cause, she saw a man standing outside, of whom she enquired what was the matter. The person instantly replied that he was a policeman, and said, "For God's sake bring me a light, for we have caught Spring-heeled Jack here in the lane." She returned to the house, and brought a candle, and handed it to the man, who was enveloped in a large cloak:

The instant she had done so, he threw off his outer garments, and, applying the lighted candle to his breast, presented a most hideous and frightful appearance, vomiting forth a quantity of blue and white flame from his mouth, his eyes resembling red balls of fire. From the hasty glance which her fright enabled her to get at his person, she observed that he wore a large helmet, and his dress, which appeared to fit him very tightly, seemed to her to resemble white oilskin. Without uttering a sentence, he darted at her, and catching her partly by her dress and the back part of her neck, placed her head under one of his arms, and commenced tearing her clothes with his claws, which she was certain were made of some metallic substance. She screamed out as loud as she could for assistance, and, by considerable exertion, got away from him, and ran towards the house to get in. Her assailant followed, and caught her on the doorstep, when he again used considerable violence, tore her neck and arms with his claws, as well as a quantity of hair from her head; her story was fully corroborated by her parents and sisters, and her injuries, which were very considerable, bore unmistakable testimony to the truth of the assault.

At the same police court, on 8 Mar., 1838, a Miss Scales deposed that as she and her sister were walking in Limehouse, about half-past eight in the evening, on coming to Green Dragon Alley, they observed some person standing in an angle in the passage. She was in advance of her sister at the time, and just as she came up to the person, who was enveloped in a large cloak, he

spirited a quantity of blue flame right in her face, which deprived her of sight, and so alarmed her, that she instantly dropped to the ground, and was seized with violent fits, which continued for several hours. In this case no violence to the person was done.

He had a literature of his own. I know of three pamphlets on the subject; one, from which is taken the accompanying illustration, is entitled "Authentic particulars of the awful appearance of the London Monster, alias Spring-heeled Jack, together with his extraordinary life, wonderful adventures and secret amours. Also an account of his horrible appearance to Miss N- and his singular letter to the Lord Mayor of London."

There is much more to be related of Jack, but space will not permit; but, whether too much attention was beginning to be paid to him with a view to his capture, or whether his love of mischief had died out, cannot be told; but certain it was that nothing was known publicly of this singular being after April, 1838, having kept London in a ferment of excitement and terror for about six months.

There is an amusing police case anent Lord John Russell's hat.—*Times*, 8 Feb.:

Thames Police Court. — Yesterday, a poor woman, named Mary Ann Blay, who stated that she resided at Limehouse, applied to Mr. Ballantyne and Mr. Broderip, the magistrates, to request their interference under very odd circumstances. The applicant stated that, about three or four months ago, she was on her way home from Poplar, where

she had been purchasing some vegetables, when she saw something black lying on the ground. She first supposed it was a piece of coal, but, on stooping to pick it up, discovered it was a hat. She walked onward, with the hat in her right hand, until she reached the Commercial Road, when she was met by a policeman, who asked her where she had got the hat. She informed him that she had picked it up at the corner of the New Road, and the policeman looked at it, and saw the name of Lord John Russell in the inside. He demanded the hat of her, and, on her refusing to give it up to him, he seized the hat, and took her into custody. She was locked up in the station houses and, on the following morning, was brought before the sitting magistrate at that office. The justice, after hearing the policeman's statement, directed her to be discharged, and gave orders that the hat should be detained for a certain time, in the station house; and, if no owner was discovered, that it should be given up to her. She had, since, made repeated inquiries of the police, but could obtain no information from them, nor any redress for the false imprisonment she had suffered.

Mr. Ballantyne asked the applicant if she was sure the hat belonged to Lord J. Russell.

The woman said there had been a whitebait Cabinet dinner at Mr. Lovegrove's, West India Dock Tavern, Blackwall, on the night she found the hat, and Lord John Russell was one of the party.

Mr. Ballantyne: Well, I don't understand how his Lordship could lose his hat at the corner of the New Road.

The woman said it was supposed that Lord J. Russell had

put his head out of the carriage window, and looked back to see if his friends were following him, when his hat fell off his head, and, as he was a Lord, he would not stop until it was picked up again (laughter).

Mr. Ballantyne: What do you want me to do in the matter?

The applicant said she wanted to know to whom the hat belonged.

Mr. Ballantyne: Why, I should say it belonged to Lord John Russell.

The woman said the hat was worth a guinea, and that if she had accepted 5/- from the policeman, and given it up to him, he would not have taken her into custody. She thought it was very hard to be subject to such tyranny because she had picked up Lord John Russell's hat, for she had done no harm to the crown of it. She supposed Lord John Russell was in liquor, or he would have ordered his carriage to stop, and picked up his hat. (Roars of laughter, in which the magistrates could not help joining.) "You may laugh," said the woman; "but it's all true what I say; you may depend upon it, the Ministers don't eat whitebait without drinking plenty of wine after it, you may be sure. (Increased laughter.) I don't know why the gentlemen laugh, I am sure. I was locked up all night away from my husband and children."

Mr. Ballantyne said it was very singular the woman could not recollect what night it was she picked up the hat, and the number and letter of the policeman who took her into custody.

The applicant said she was too much alarmed at being locked up in the station house, and brought before the magistrate, to recollect what night it was, or the policeman's identity.

Mr. Ballantyne said it was a very odd affair, and he would direct the books to be searched to ascertain when the woman was brought before the magistrate.

Soon afterwards, the woman was again brought up.

Mr. Ballantyne said, it appeared from the minutes that she was brought before him on Tuesday, the 3rd of October last, on suspicion of stealing a hat, and that the policeman said that he had stopped her at two o'clock in the morning with the hat in her possession. It appeared that he had discharged her, but no mention was made of the hat belonging to Lord John Russell. If that fact had been mentioned to him, he would have ordered the hat to be restored to his Lordship immediately.

The Applicant: I am sure it is his Lordship's hat. There is Lord John Russell inside of it, quite plain; it's a new one.

Mr. Ballantyne: Very well; an inquiry shall be made about the hat, and you can attend here to-morrow, and we will let you know what has become of it. I think Lord John Russell has the best claim to the hat, if he has not already got it.

The sequel:

Times, 10 Feb.: – On Thursday, Mary Ann Blay again appeared before Mr. Ballantyne upon the subject of Lord John's hat. She adhered to her old story, that the hat had the

noble Home Secretary's name in it when she picked it up, but it had, subsequently, been torn out, after it was taken out of her possession. Mr. Ballantyne examined the hat, and said it was a dirty, greasy hat – a boy's hat, and that he would not give 6d. for it. The policeman who took the woman in custody declared that the woman's statement was, altogether, a fabrication, and that the hat never had the name of Lord John Russell in it. Mr. Ballantyne said he would make no order about the hat; and, if the woman thought she had been wrongly imprisoned, she might seek her remedy elsewhere.

CHAPTER IV

Lords and pugilists – Penny “Gaffs” – Steam between England and America – A man-woman – Designs for Nelson Monument – A termagant – Scold’s bridles, &c.

I must give another police case, as showing the manners and customs of the *jeunesse dorée* of this period.

Times, 19 Feb.:

Marlborough Street. – On Saturday, Samuel Evans, better known as “Young Dutch Sam,” a pugilist, was brought before Mr. Conant, charged with having committed an unprovoked and violent assault on policeman Mackenzie, C 182, and Lord Waldegrave was also charged with attempting to rescue Evans from the police.

The defendant Evans, when sober, is civil and well-conducted, but, when drunk, is one of the most dangerous ruffians connected with the prize-fighting gang. Lord Waldegrave is a very young nobleman, with a fund of native simplicity in his countenance, rendered the more conspicuous by the style of dress he had adopted, namely, a large coloured shawl round his neck, and a rough pilot coat. Both parties exhibited unquestionable proofs of the effect of their previous night’s potations.

Policeman Mackenzie, who had his arm in a sling, made the following statement: About a quarter-past six that morning, after he had come off duty, he went to

the Standard public house, in Piccadilly, for the purpose of getting some refreshment, but, on perceiving some of the saloon frequenters there, to whom he was personally obnoxious, in consequence of having taken disorderly persons of their acquaintance into custody, he was about to go back, when he found himself suddenly pushed into the house, with sufficient violence to cause his cape to fall off. While engaged in folding up his cape, the defendant Evans said, "Will any gentleman like to see a policeman put on his back?" Complainant had not exchanged a single word with anybody; he, however, found himself suddenly and quite unexpectedly seized by the defendant, who had come behind him, and then thrown with violence upon the floor; the defendant Evans fell upon him at the same time; and, as complainant lay almost stunned and unable to rise, some persons called out "Shame!" Complainant was then helped up and assisted out of the house. He went immediately to the station house, and mentioned what had occurred to Inspector Beresford, who instantly sent a sufficient force to take the offenders into custody. Complainant went and pointed out Dutch Sam to his comrades, and the defendant was taken into custody. Lord Waldegrave, who was in the pugilist's company, declared the police should not take his friend, and he attempted to prevent the police from doing their duty. Complainant, feeling his shoulder pain him very much, went to the surgeon, and, by that gentleman's advice, proceeded to the Charing Cross Hospital. When he was examined, it was ascertained that one of the bones of his shoulder was broken.

Another policeman stated that Lord Waldegrave was very drunk, and, when his Lordship attempted to resist the police, he was, accidentally, thrown down on the pavement, and witness picked him up.

Lord Waldegrave: He! he! he! Picked me up, did you? Oh! He! he! he!

Mr. Conant: This is no laughing matter, I can tell you; and it is quite improper of you to make it a subject of merriment.

Lord Waldegrave: He! he! he! I beg pardon, but I can't help laughing.

Mr. Conant asked Evans what he had to say in his defence?

Evans: Why, you see, Lord Waldegrave and me had been supping together – hadn't we, my Lord?

Lord Waldegrave: Yes, we had.

Evans: And when we went into the public house there, we saw the policeman, who was drunk, and who had been drinking purl in the house. The policeman asked me to wrestle with him, and, as I thought I could throw him, I accepted the challenge.

The Inspector proved that there was not one word of truth in Evans's defence as far as regarded the sobriety of Mackenzie. The assault took place within a few minutes after Mackenzie had come off duty, and, certainly, before he could have time to get refreshment.

The policeman declared what the defendant asserted was entirely false. He had taken nothing to drink; and, as to challenging a man like the defendant to wrestle, the

assertion was improbable.

Inspector Beresford, on being asked if he was certain Evans was drunk, answered that he was decidedly drunk.

Evans: Silence, sweep, let a gentleman speak. I can get a dozen oaths for half-a-crown.

Mr. Conant said the assault on the policeman was wanton and unprovoked, and the matter was further aggravated by the fact that a person of the defendant's well-known pugilistic powers had chosen to attack an unoffending party. He should, therefore, call on the defendant Evans to put in good bail.

Evans: Serve his Lordship the same; for I like to have such a pal.

Mr. Conant directed that Lord Waldegrave should be put back until a second magistrate arrived.

Mr. Dyer having, soon afterwards, taken his seat on the bench, Lord Waldegrave was placed at the bar.

Policeman Filmer, C 130, stated that he went with others to the Standard public house, and took Evans into custody. Lord Waldegrave threw his arms round his friend, and swore he should not be taken. Witness swung his Lordship away, and, in doing so, his Lordship fell down. Witness picked him up, and would have let him go had his Lordship abstained from repeating his conduct. As he would not allow the police to do their duty, he took him into custody.

Mr. Conant asked his Lordship what he had to say?

Lord Waldegrave: I have nothing to say. Perhaps I had taken too much that night.

Policeman: His Lordship was very drunk.

Lord Waldegrave: Not very.

Mr. Conant: There has been no complaint of your conduct at the station house, and I daresay your Lordship feels hurt at being in the company of a person of the other defendant's description. Taking into consideration the violence of the outrage committed by Evans, as a warning, we must inflict a heavy fine. You must, therefore, pay £5 to the Queen.

Mr. Dyer: And because – in our summary jurisdiction – we cannot go beyond that sum, we inflict it as being the highest penalty in our power.

The sum was paid, and the noble defendant discharged.

The whole social tone was low, from the highest to the lowest, and if the police court gives us occasional glimpses of aristocratic amusement, so it affords us a view of the entertainments provided for the lower classes. Let us take one.

Times, 10 March:

Hatton Garden. – For some time past, numerous complaints have been made to the magistrates of this office of two penny theatres, one in Mortimer Market, Tottenham Court Road, and the other in a field adjacent to Bagnigge Wells Road, where gangs of young thieves nightly assembled. On Wednesday last, several inhabitants of Mortimer Market attended at the Office to complain of the former establishment, when Mr. Rogers granted a warrant to apprehend the whole of the parties concerned, and on Thursday night, Duke, Baylis and Halls, of this Office, in company with Inspector Jenkins and a body

of constables, proceeded to the theatre, and captured the manager, performers, and musicians, and the whole of them were, yesterday, brought to the office, and placed at the bar, when the office was excessively crowded.

There were twelve prisoners, some of whom were attired in their theatrical habiliments, with their countenances painted, which made a very grotesque appearance.

Duke being sworn, stated that, in consequence of a warrant, on Thursday night last, about 9 o'clock, he proceeded, with other officers, to a penny theatre in Mortimer Market, St. Pancras, where he found the whole of the prisoners, some of whom were engaged in performing their parts, whilst Ewyn, the manager, was employed in taking money at the doors, and the woman, Green, was acting as check taker. Campbell and Lewis were enacting their parts upon the stage, and Joseph Burrows was in his theatrical dress between them, with his face painted and wearing a huge pair of moustaches. John Pillar was in a temporary orchestra with a large violoncello, scraping away most melodramatically, whilst the players were endeavouring to humour the sounds, and to suit their action to the word, and the word to the action; and just at that part of the performance when Burrows had to exclaim, "The officers of justice are coming," witness and his brother officers rushed upon the stage, and apprehended the whole of them.

Mr. Rogers: What description of audience was there?

Duke: A dirty, ragged set, principally consisting of boys and girls; two of them were barefooted, and had scarce a rag

to cover them, and did not seem to have been washed for a month. The theatre was of the most wretched description; there was a temporary stage, and bits of scenery. The boys said they were errand boys and servants. Brierly and Smith said they were country actors out of an engagement, and had visited the place out of curiosity.

Mr. Mallett: Had they an inscription that they were “Licensed pursuant to Act of Parliament”?

Duke: They had not. On the gates was written up, “For this evening’s performance The Spectre of the Grave; after which, a comic song by Mr. Ewyn; to conclude with The Key of the Little Door.” They found various theatrical dresses and other properties, with stars, swords, etc., now produced.

Baylis proved having paid 1d. for admission. He paid the money to the woman Green. Ewyn was at the door, and he confessed that he was the manager. He took him into custody, and, subsequently, he apprehended Lewis and Campbell, at the back of the stage, in their theatrical dresses.

Mr. Rogers: Have you got “The Spectre of the Grave” here?

Inspector Jenkins: No, your Worship, he vanished. The other male performers were dressed in sandals and armour, with their helmets up.

Hall and the other officers corroborated the above evidence. Several inhabitants of Mortimer Market proved that they were, every night, alarmed by firing off guns, cries of “Fire,” clashing of swords, the most boisterous

ranting and shrieks from the voices of the ladies of the *corps dramatique*, and the place was a perfect nuisance to the neighbourhood.

The owner of the place stated that, on the 24th of January, he let the place to a person named Summers, for chair making, when it was turned into a theatre.

Ewyn said he had engaged with Summers to divide the profits of the theatrical speculation. Summers agreed to take the place, and he (Ewyn) to provide the scenery and wardrobe; "and proud I am to say, that I have conducted the consarn respectably, which some of the neighbours can testify. This is the head and front of my offending – no more."

Inspector Jenkins said that, about a month ago, he called on Ewyn and cautioned him, but he said that the magistrates had nothing to do with the matter.

Mr. Rogers, addressing the prisoners, said they had received a warning which they did not heed. He should not order them to find bail, but would discharge them; and, if they dared to repeat their performances after this admonition, he would grant a warrant for their apprehension, and every one of them should find bail, or be committed. They held out temptation to the children of poor persons, some of whom, it appears, were without shoes and nearly naked, who robbed their parents, or others, for the purpose of procuring the penny for admission. He would order their paraphernalia to be restored to them, but, on condition that they would remove their fittings, and desist from any future performances.

Ewyn: You must give me time to take down the seats and decorations.

Mr. Rogers: You must take them down this day.

Ewyn (with a start): What! this day? Impossible.

Mr. Rogers directed Inspector Jones to see the mandate obeyed.

The month of April is famous for the inauguration of steam traffic between England and America. A vessel named the *Savannah* had in 1819 crossed from America to England, but her steam was only intended to be auxiliary to her sailing power, for her boilers had only a pressure of 20 lbs. to the square inch. She sailed from New York on 28 Mar., 1819, reached Savannah on 7 Ap., and anchored at Liverpool on 19 June; on her return home her engines were taken out, and she was finally lost off Long Island. In 1836 the Great Western Railway founded the Great Western Steam Co., whose vessels were intended to run from Bristol in co-operation with the railway, and the first ship built was the Great Western, the largest steamer then afloat. She was 236 feet long and her engines showed 750 indicated horse power, her registered tonnage being 1,300. She was intended to be the pioneer ship, and was ready for sea in April, 1838; but competition was as keen then as now, and the St. Georges Steam Packet Coy. started their s.s. *Sirius*, for the voyage to New York, from London, on the 29th March. She had a tonnage of 700 tons, and her engines were of 320 horse-power. She was elegantly fitted-up, and started with 22 passengers, whose

number was increased at Cork, and, being intended solely for a passenger boat, carried no cargo. On going down the Thames, she encountered her rival, the Great Western, which had a pleasure party on board, and a trial of speed took place between the two, resulting in favour of the Sirius. She sailed from Cork on 9th April. The Great Western sailed from Bristol on the 12th April, and both reached New York on the same day, the Sirius being first. The Great Western made, in all, 64 passages between the two countries, her fastest passage occupying 12 days, 7½ hours. At the present writing, the record voyage for an English steamer (the *Lucania*) is 5 days, 7 hours, 23 minutes.

The *Manchester Guardian* of 14th April gives an account of a woman living in that city, who for many years passed as a man, which has occurred before, but the extraordinary part of this story is that she *married another woman*. – “Subsequent inquiries confirm the truth of the statements made in the *Guardian* of Wednesday last, as to this singular case. This woman man, who, for probably more than 25 years, has succeeded in concealing her sex, and in pursuing a trade of more than ordinarily masculine and hazardous description, with a degree of skill and ability which has led to her establishment in a good business in this town, bound herself apprentice, at the age of 16 or 17 years, to a Mr. Peacock, a bricklayer and builder, at Bawtry, a small market town in the West Riding of Yorkshire. She did not remain with Mr. Peacock during the whole period of her apprenticeship, but was ‘turned over,’ as it is called, to another person in the same

business. It was during her apprenticeship that she met with her present wife; and they were married at the old parish church of Sheffield, in the year 1816, when the wife was only 17 years old. Since the investigation and disclosure of the circumstances, on Thursday week, the wife and husband have separated. She was, for many years, a special constable in the 13th division of that body, acting for this town; and we are assured that, on all occasions when the services of the division were required, as at elections, Orange processions, and meetings of trades' unions, turn-outs, etc., so far from absenting herself from what, as in the case of well founded apprehension of a riot, must have been, to a woman, a post of some unpleasantness, she is remembered to have been one of the most punctual in attendance, and the most forward volunteer in actual duty, in that division. We understand that she is no longer a special constable, because she did not, on the last annual special session, held for that purpose at the New Bailey, present herself to be resworn. She was not discarded or discharged; there was no complaint against her; and, probably, the extension of her own business was her only motive for not resuming the duties of this office. Altogether, this is the most singular case of the kind which has ever reached our knowledge."

The following is an advertisement which appeared in the *Times* of 27th April: – "Nelson Monument. – The Committee for erecting a Monument to the Memory of Lord Nelson hereby give notice that they are desirous of receiving from architects, artists, or other persons, Designs for such a Monument, to be erected in

Trafalgar Square.

“The Committee cannot, in the present state of the subscriptions, fix definitely the sum to be expended, but they recommend that the estimated cost of the several designs should be confined within the sums of £20,000 and £30,000. This condition, and that of the intended site, are the only restrictions to which the artists are limited.”

In the same newspaper of 16 May, we read of a punishment which might, occasionally, be revived with advantage, as being less dangerous than the ducking stool, and, probably, quite as efficacious, although we have the authority of St. James, “For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things of the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind, but the tongue can no man tame.” It relates how, “at the Mayor’s Court, Stafford, last week, Mary, wife of Thomas Careless, of the Broad Eye, a perfect termagant, was ordered to pay 1/- penalty, and 7/6 costs, for an unprovoked assault on Mary, the wife of Lewis Bromley. During the investigation, her garrulity was so incessant that the mayor was under the necessity of sending for the ‘scold’s bridle,’ an iron instrument of very antique construction, which, in olden times, was occasionally called into use. It is formed of an elliptical bow of iron, enclosing the head from the lower extremity of one ear to the other, with a transverse piece of iron from the nape of the neck to the mouth, and completely covers the tongue, preventing its movement, and the whole machinery, when adjusted, is locked at the back of the head. The bridle is to

be put in thorough repair, and hung *in terrorem* in the Mayor's office, to be used as occasion may call it forth."

These "scold's bridles," or "branks," as they are sometimes called, are not uncommon. The earliest dated one is preserved at Walton-on-Thames, and bears the date 1633, with the inscription:

"Chester presents Walton with a bridle,
To curb women's tongues that talk to idle."

Brayley, in his "History of Surrey," says that it was given by a gentleman named Chester, who lost a valuable estate through a gossiping, lying woman; but, as there are several examples of branks in the Palatinate, one being kept in the gaol at Chester, some people think it was a present from that city. There is one at Leicester, and another at Newcastle-on-Tyne, which used to hang in the mayor's parlour, and tradition has it that many cases of disputes between women have been speedily and satisfactorily settled on his worship's pointing to these branks.

There is one in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, which is very tender as far as the gag is concerned, but which has a leading chain fastened between the eyes. Hainstall, Ridware, Lichfield, Morpeth, Shrewsbury, Holme, Kendal, Altrincham, Macclesfield, Congleton (where it was last used in 1824), all have examples, whilst Chester has four! There are several in Scotland, and there are some in private hands, notably one which used to be

in the Mayer Museum, Liverpool, which came from Warrington, where, however, the brank formerly used at Carrington is preserved, and there are several places – Newcastle-under-Lyne (now in the Mayer Collection), Manchester, and others – where they have existed. There is a very grotesque one in Doddington Park, which is a mask, having eyeholes, and a long funnel-shaped peak projecting from the mouth; and there are some very terribly cruel ones, with fearful gags; but these can scarcely come under scold's or gossip's bridles. There was one at Forfar, with a spiked gag, which pierced the tongue, and an even more severe one is at Stockport; whilst those at Ludlow and Worcester are, also, instruments of torture.

CHAPTER V

Thom, the religious fanatic – His riots and death –
Delusions of his followers.

From the earliest ages of Christianity *pseudo-Christoi*, or false Christs, existed. Simon Magus, Dositheus, and the famous Barcochab were among the first of them, and they were followed by Moses, in Crete, in the fifth century; Julian, in Palestine, *circa* A.D. 530; and Srenus, in Spain, *circa* A.D. 714. There were, in the 12th century, some seven or eight in France, Spain and Persia; and, coming to more modern times, there was Sabbatai Zewi, a native of Aleppo, or Smyrna, who proclaimed himself to be the Messiah, in Jerusalem, *circa* 1666. A list of religious fanatics would be a long one, but the *pseudo-Christos* of modern times was, certainly, John Nicholl Thom, of St. Columb, Cornwall, *alias* Sir William Percy Honeywood Courtenay, Knight of Malta, and King of Jerusalem; who also claimed to be Jesus Christ, in proof of which he shewed punctures in his hands, and a cicatrice on his side.

He was first introduced to public notice in Michaelmas, 1832, when he paid a visit to Canterbury, and took up his abode, for some time, at the “Rose Inn,” where he was remarkable for his eccentric behaviour, passing under the name of Rothschild. His countenance and costume denoted foreign extraction, while his

language and conversation showed that he was well acquainted with almost every part of the kingdom. He often dressed in a fine suit of Italian clothing, and, sometimes, in the gayer and more imposing costume of the east. In December of the same year, he surprised the inhabitants of Canterbury by proposing himself as a candidate for the representation of that city in Parliament, under the name of Sir W. P. H. Courtenay. His canvass proceeded with extraordinary success; and, such were his persuasive powers, that people of all ranks felt an interest in his society; some, however, considered him insane, while others were of a contrary opinion, and he did not succeed in his ambition.

He next got mixed up in a smuggling affair, H.M. sloop *Lively* having captured a smuggling craft (the *Admiral Hood*) off the Goodwin Sands. He attended the examination of the smugglers before the magistrates at Rochester, attired in a fancy costume, and having a small scimitar suspended from his neck, by a massive gold chain. He defended one of the men, who, despite his advocacy, was convicted. He then offered himself as a witness, swore that he had seen the whole transaction, that there was no smuggling, and that the *Lively* was to blame. This the prosecution could not stand; he was indicted for perjury, and was tried at Maidstone on 25 July, 1833. The sentence of the Court was imprisonment and transportation, but, being proved to be insane, this was commuted to confinement in the lunatic asylum, at Barming Heath. After about four years spent in this establishment, he was released, on security being given for his

future good behaviour. He then went to live at the residence of Mr. Francis, of Fairbrook, in the neighbourhood of Boughton, near Canterbury. Owing to some misunderstanding with the family, he removed to an adjoining cottage, and, at the time of which I write, he lived at a farm-house, called Bossenden farm, occupied by a person named Culver.

The influence obtained, by this maniac, over the small farmers and peasantry in his neighbourhood, is most astonishing. They believed in all he told them; first that he should be a great chieftain in Kent, and that they should all live rent free on his land, and that if they would follow his advice, they should have good living and large estates, as he had great influence at Court, and was to sit at the Queen's right hand, on the day of her Coronation. It would seem as if his madness, then, was personal and political, but the religious mania speedily developed itself. He told his deluded followers that they were oppressed by the laws in general, but more particularly by the new poor law; and called upon them to place themselves under his command. Nearly 100 at once joined him, and as they marched through the neighbouring parishes their numbers increased. It was then that he proclaimed his divinity – assuring them that both he and they were not only invincible, but bullet proof, and that they could never die.

The following account, which appears to me to be the most succinct of those I have seen, is from the *Times* of 1 June:

“On Monday (28 May) they sallied forth from the village

of Boughton, where they bought bread, and proceeded to Wills's house, near Fairbrook. A loaf was broken asunder, and placed on a pole, with a flag of white and blue, on which was a rampant lion. Thence they proceeded to Goodnestone, near Faversham, producing throughout the whole neighbourhood the greatest excitement, and adding to their numbers by the harangues occasionally delivered by this ill-fated madman. At this farm Courtenay stated that 'he would strike the bloody blow.' A match was then taken from a bean stack, which had been introduced by one of the party. They next proceeded to a farm at Herne Hill, where Courtenay requested the inmates to feed his friends, which request was immediately complied with. Their next visit was at Dargate Common, where Sir William, taking off his shoes, said, 'I now stand on my own bottom.' By Sir William's request, his party went to prayers, and then proceeded to Bossenden farm, where they supped, and slept in the barn that night. At 3 o'clock, on Tuesday morning they left, and proceeded to Sittingbourne to breakfast, where Sir William paid 25s.; they then visited Newnham, where a similar treat was given at the 'George.' After visiting Eastling, Throwley, Selwich Lees and Selling, and occasionally addressing the populace, holding out to them such inducements as are usually made by persons desirous of creating a disturbance, they halted, in a chalk pit, to rest, and, on Wednesday evening, arrived at Culver's farm, called Bossenden, close to the scene of action. Mr. Curling, having had some of his men enticed from their work, applied for a warrant for their apprehension. Mears,

a constable, in company with his brother, proceeded to Culver's house, when, on application being made for the men alluded to, Sir William immediately shot the young man who accompanied his brother in the execution of his duty. Such was the excitement, and the desperate menaces of Sir William and his party, that it became necessary for the magistrates to interfere to put a stop to the proceedings, by the capture of the ringleader of the party, from whose advice to his followers the most serious consequences were likely to ensue. At 12 o'clock, they assembled at a place called the Osier Bed, where every means were resorted to, to quell the disturbance, but without success. Sir William defied interruption to his men, and fired on the Rev. William Handley, of Herne Hill, who, with his brother, was assisting to take him into custody. They then made their way to Bossenden Wood, where they lay in ambush; but, as no means appeared to present themselves, by which the ringleader could safely be secured, he being evidently mad, and in possession of loaded firearms, threatening to shoot the first man who interfered with him, it became necessary to apply for the assistance of the 45th regiment, stationed in Canterbury barracks. On the arrival of a detachment of this regiment, they proceeded to the wood, where the party was awaiting their arrival.

“A few minutes previous to the attack, Sir William loudly halloed to his companions, supposed for the purpose of getting them prepared for the fight.

“Sir William, on perceiving his opponents, advanced with the greatest *sang froid*, and deliberately shot

Lieutenant Bennett of the regiment, before his own men. This occasioned a return from the man covering his officer, who advanced, and shot Sir William, who fell, and died instantly. The excitement, at that period, occasioned by each party losing its commander, caused a desperate attack, which terminated in the death of ten persons, besides the brother of the constable shot in the morning, and several others seriously wounded, of some of whom little hopes are entertained of their recovery. The weapons in the hands of the followers of Sir William, were chiefly, if not altogether, heavy bludgeons.”

The following, from a correspondent, goes far to show the delusions shared by this maniac and his followers:

“The mention of this lad’s name, reminds me that his mother is said to have done more than any other person in the parish to foster and encourage the belief which she herself entertained, that Thom was our blessed Redeemer and Saviour. So steadfast was she in her belief, that when, after the battle in the wood, a neighbour went to tell her ‘the awful news,’ that Thom was killed, and her own son wounded, she would not credit the information. ‘Sir William killed!’ said she, ‘no, no, you can’t kill him; it is not the truth, it is not possible.’ The reply to her was: ‘It is the truth, and it is possible.’ She again asserted that it was not possible. Again the reply was: ‘It is possible, and it is as true as that your poor boy has got a shot in his thigh.’ Then, and not till then, would she credit that her son was hurt. But as to Sir William, she still remained incredulous, saying: ‘Mind,

three days will show you and all the world what Sir William is. When that time is elapsed, you will see whether he is not that which he professes to be.’

“Of the general belief in the neighbourhood that he was the Saviour, I saw a strong proof in some writing which I found on the parsonage barn at Herne Hill. It has been there for the last ten days, and is said to be in the handwriting of Wills. On the left side of the door is written, in one long line, these words, with spelling and capitals just as I have copied them: – ‘If you newho was on earth your harts Wod turn’; then in another: ‘But dont Wate to late’; and then, in a third, ‘They how R.’ On the right side of the door is the following: ‘O that great day of gudgment, is close at hand’; in another: ‘it now peps in the dor every man according to his woks’; and in a third: ‘Our rites and liberties We Will have.’ I mentioned some of them in a former communication. At one of the places where he ordered provisions for his followers, it was in these words: ‘Feed my sheep.’ To convince his disciples of his divine commission, he is said to have pointed his pistol at the stars, and told him that he would make them fall from their spheres. He then fired at some particularly bright star; and, his pistol having been rammed down with tow steeped in oil, and sprinkled over with steel filings, produced, on being fired, certain bright sparkles of light, which he immediately said were falling stars. Again, in the early part of his progress on Monday, he went away from his followers with a man named Wills, and two of the other rioters, saying to them, ‘Do you stay here, whilst I go yonder,’ pointing to a bean stack, ‘and

strike the bloody blow.’ When they arrived at the stack, to which they marched with a flag, the flag bearer laid his flag on the ground, and knelt down to pray. The others then put in, it is said, a lighted match; but Thom seized it and forbade it to burn, and the fire was not kindled. This, on their return to the company, was announced as a miracle worked by the Saviour. There is another of his acts, which he mentioned as one of the proofs of his Divinity, that I confess myself at a loss to understand. After he had fired one shot at the constable, Mears, and subsequently chopped at him with his dirk, he went into the house, seized a loaded pistol, and on coming out, said: ‘Now, am I not your Saviour?’ The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when he pulled the trigger of his pistol, and shot Mears a second time.”

He administered a parody on the blessed Sacrament, in bread and water to his followers, before the encounter and harangued them. He told them on this occasion, as he did on many others, that there was great opposition in the land, and, indeed, throughout the world, but, that if they would follow him, he would lead them on to glory. He told them he had come to earth on a cloud, and that, on a cloud, he should some day be removed from them; that neither bullets nor weapons could injure him, or them, if they had but faith in him as their Saviour: and that if 10,000 soldiers came against them, they would either turn to their side, or fall dead at his command. At the end of his harangue, Alexander Foad, a respectable farmer, and one of his followers, knelt down at his feet and worshipped him; and so did

another man named Brankford. Foad then asked Thom whether he should follow him in the body, or go home and follow him in heart. To this Thom replied: "Follow me in the body." Foad then sprang on his feet in an ecstasy of joy, and, with a voice of great animation, exclaimed: "Oh, be joyful! Oh, be joyful! The Saviour has accepted me. Go on – go on, till I drop, I'll follow thee!" Brankford was also accepted as a follower, and exhibited the same enthusiastic fervour, while Thom uttered terrific denunciations of eternal torture in hell fire against all who should refuse to follow him.

With the death of Thom and his deluded followers, the excitement calmed down, and entirely subsided after the trial of nine prisoners, which took place at Maidstone, on the 9th of August, before Lord Denman. They were charged on two counts: first, with aiding and abetting John Thom, *alias* Courtenay, in the murder of Nicholas Mears, on the 31st of May, and second, with being principals in the murder. Lord Denman charged the jury that, if they were of opinion that Thom was of unsound mind, so that, if he had been put upon his trial, he could not have been convicted of murder, the principal being acquitted, the accessories must also be acquitted, and the prisoners could not be found guilty on the first count. This, the jury acquiesced in, and brought in a verdict of "guilty" on the second count, with a strong recommendation to mercy on account of the infatuation under which they were led astray by Courtenay. Lord Denman pronounced sentence of death upon the prisoners, but added, that

their lives would be spared. Two were sentenced to transportation for life; one to transportation for ten years; and the remainder to be imprisoned for one year, and kept to hard labour in the House of Correction, one month in solitary confinement.

CHAPTER VI

The Queen's Coronation – The Carriages – The fair and festivities in Hyde Park – The Marquis of Waterford's drive – His pranks at Melton Mowbray – Steam carriages – Dog carriages – Grand dinner at Guildhall.

The next event which occupied the public attention was the Queen's Coronation, which took place on the 28th of June. It was, like the "Half Coronation" of William IV., a much plainer affair than that of George the Magnificent, the walking procession of all the estates of the realm, and the banquet in Westminster Hall, with all the feudal services thereunto belonging, being wholly dispensed with. The day began badly, with a cold shower about 8 a.m., but it cleared off, and the sun shone out fitfully, throughout the time the ceremony occupied – the head of the procession starting from Buckingham Palace at 10 a.m., and the Queen reaching Westminster Abbey at half-past eleven. Next to the Queen herself, the principal attraction in the procession was the equipages and liveries of the Ambassadors Extraordinary, chief among which was the carriage of Marshal Sout (who represented France), which had formerly belonged to the last great prince of the House of Condé, the father of the Duc de Bourbon, and which, by its superior magnificence, eclipsed all other vehicles. Besides which, it held the Duke of Dalmatia,

Wellington's old foe, who had now come to visit, in peace, the country he had so manfully fought against.

Of the ceremony itself, I say nothing – everything was done decorously and in order. It took a long time, for it was a quarter to four when the royal procession reformed and took its way through the nave of the abbey. The Queen entertained a party of 100 at dinner; and, in the evening, witnessed, from the roof of her palace, the fireworks discharged in the Green Park. The Duke of Wellington gave a grand ball at Apsley House, for which cards of invitation were issued for 2,000 persons.

As an indication of the numbers of people set down at the Abbey, I may mention that the carriages which were ordered to proceed (after setting down) to the south side of Westminster Bridge, occupied a line from the bridge to Kennington Cross (more than a mile). The carriages which were to proceed, after setting down their company, to the west side of London, formed a line nearly to Kensington (a mile and a half). Those ordered to wait in the Strand extended, in double lines, to St. Mary le Strand, and those directed to wait in Bird Cage Walk, St. James's Park, occupied (in double rows) the whole line to Buckingham Palace.

There was a balloon ascent from Hyde Park, which was a comparative failure, for it descended in Marylebone Lane, quite done up with its short journey, and another sent up from Vauxhall, which was more successful. There were grand displays of fireworks in the Green and Hyde Parks, and all London was most beautifully and brilliantly illuminated.

But the great thing was the Fair in Hyde Park, which had official leave to exist for two days – but which, in fact, lasted four. The area allotted to it comprised nearly one third of the Park, extending from near the margin of the Serpentine to within a short distance of Grosvenor Gate. The best account I know of this Fair is in *The Morning Chronicle* of 29 June, and I here reproduce it:

“Of all the scenes which we witnessed, connected with the Coronation, probably this was the most lively, and that in which there was the least confusion, considering the mass of persons collected together. Our readers are already aware that the Fair was permitted to take place by the Government, on the petition of the present holders of the show which formerly belonged to the celebrated Richardson; and it was to their care, together with that of Mr. Mallalieu, the Superintendent of Police, that its general management was entrusted. In justice to those gentlemen, we must say that the arrangements made for the accommodation of the public were admirable, while they were carried out with the very greatest success. The booths were arranged in a square form, and covered a space of ground about 1,400 feet long and about 1,000 feet broad.

“They were arranged in regular rows, ample space being allowed between them for the free passage of the people; and they consisted of every variety of shape, while they were decked with flags of all colours and nations. One portion of the fair was set apart exclusively for ginger-bread and fancy booths, while those rows by which these were surrounded

were appropriated to the use of showmen, and of persons who dealt in the more substantial articles of refreshment. Of the latter description, however, the readers would recognize many as regular frequenters of such scenes; but, probably, the booth which attracted the greatest attention, from its magnitude, was that erected by Williams, the celebrated boiled beef monger of the Old Bailey. This was pitched in the broadest part of the fair, and immediately adjoining Richardson's show; and, at the top of it was erected a gallery for the use of those who were desirous of witnessing the fireworks in the evening, and, to which, access was to be procured by payment of a small sum.

“While this person, and the no less celebrated Alger, the proprietor of the Crown and Anchor, were astonishing the visitors with the enormous extent of the accommodation which they could afford the public, others set up claims of a character more agreeable to the age in the exceedingly tasty mode in which they had decorated their temporary houses. Of these, that which struck us as most to be admired, was a tent erected by a person named Bull, of Hackney, the interior of which, decorated with fluted pillars of glazed calico, had a really beautiful appearance. It would be useless, however, to attempt to particularize every booth, for each held out its alluring attractions to the gaping crowd with equal force, and each appeared to be sufficiently patronized by the friends of its proprietor.

“Not a few, in addition to the solid attractions of eating and drinking, held out those of a more ‘airy’ description, and, in many, it was announced that a ‘grand ball’ would

be held in the evening, 'to commence at six o'clock'; whilst, in others, bands of music were heard 'in full play,' joining their sweet sounds to the melodious beatings of gongs and shouting through trumpets of the adjoining shows. In attractions of this kind we need only say that the fair was, in most respects, fully equal to any other at which we ever had the good fortune to be present, whether at Greenwich, or Croydon, or in any other of the suburban or metropolitan districts. Beef and ham, beer and wine, chickens and salad, were all equally plentiful, and the taste of the most fastidious might be pleased as to the quality, or the quantity, of the provisions provided for him. In the pastry cooks' booths, the usual variety of gingerbread nuts, and gilt cocks in breeches, and kings and queens, were to be procured; while, in some of them, the more refined luxury of ices was advertised, an innovation upon the ancient style of refreshment which we, certainly, had never expected to see introduced into the canvas shops of the fair pastry cooks.

“While these *marchands* were holding out their various attractions to the physical tastes of the assembled multitude, the showkeepers were not less actively employed in endeavouring to please the eye of those who were willing to enjoy their buffooneries, or their wonders. Fat boys and living skeletons, Irish giants and Welsh dwarfs, children with two heads, and animals without any heads at all, were among the least of the wonders to be seen; while the more rational exhibition of wild beasts joined with the mysterious wonders of the conjuror and the athletic performances of tumblers, in calling forth expressions of surprise and delight

from the old, as well as from the young, who were induced to contribute their pennies 'to see the show.'

"Nor were these the only modes of procuring amusement which presented themselves. On the Serpentine river a number of boats had been launched, which had been procured from the Thames, and watermen were employed, during the whole day, in rowing about those who were anxious to enjoy the refreshing coolness of the water after the turmoil and heat of the fair. Ponies and donkeys were in the outskirts of the fair, plentiful, for the use of the young who were inclined for equestrian exercise, while archery grounds and throw sticks held out their attractions to the adepts in such practices, and roundabouts and swings were ready to gratify the tastes of the adventurous. Kensington Gardens were, as usual, open to the public, and not a few who were fearful of joining in the crowd, contented themselves here, in viewing the gay scene from a distance. Timorous, however, as they might be, of personal inconvenience, they did not fail to enjoy the opportunities which were afforded them of looking into the book of fate; and we observed many of the fairest parts of the creation busily engaged in deep and private confabulations with those renowned seers, the gypsies.

"With regard to those persons who visited the fair, we must say we never saw a more orderly body. From an early hour the visitors were flocking in; but it was not until Her Majesty had gone to Westminster Abbey that the avenues approaching Hyde Park became crowded. Then, indeed, the countless thousands of London appeared to be poured

forth, and all seemed to be bound for the same point of destination. Thousands who had taken up their standing places at Hyde Park Corner, poured through the gate; whilst many who had assumed positions at a greater distance from the Parks, passed through the squares and through Grosvenor Gate. Every avenue was soon filled, every booth was soon crammed full of persons desirous of procuring refreshment and rest after the fatigue of standing so long in the crowd to view the procession.

“These, however, were not the only persons who joined the throng. Every cab, coach, or omnibus which had been left disengaged, appeared to be driving to the same point, full of passengers. Fulham, Putney, Mile End and Brixton alike contributed their vehicles to carry the people to the Parks, and thousands from the very extremity of the City were to be seen flocking towards the Fair. All seemed bent on the same object, that of procuring amusement, and work seemed to have been suspended, as if by common consent. While the East-end thrust forth her less aristocratic workmen, the West-end was not altogether idle in furnishing its quota to the throng, and we noticed many really elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen alight from their carriages to view the enlivening scene; and many of them, who were, apparently, strangers to such exhibitions, were, evidently, not a little amused at the grotesque imitations of those amusements in which the aristocracy delight.

“Carriages of every description were admitted into the Parks, and the splendid carriage of an aristocrat was not

unfrequently followed by the tilted waggon of some remover of furniture, with its load of men, women and children, who had come to 'see the fun.' All seemed, alike, bent on amusement; all, alike, appeared to throw aside those restraints which rank, fashion, or station had placed upon them, and to enter fully into the enjoyment of the busy scene in which they were actors. The delightful locality of the Fair, the bright sunbeams playing upon the many-coloured tents, the joyous laughter of the people, untouched by debauchery, and unseduced by the gross pleasures of the appetite; the gay dresses of the women, all in their best; joined in making the scene one which must live long in the recollection of those who witnessed it. All appeared to remember that this was the day of the Coronation of a Queen, so youthful, so beautiful, so pure, and all appeared to be determined that no act of insubordination or of disorder on their part should sully the bright opening of a reign so hopeful, and from which so much happiness is to be expected.

“We have already said that the arrangements of the fair were excellent; but, while these called forth our admiration, the exceeding attention paid to the public by the police force appeared to prevent the possibility of accident or robbery. All gambling booths and thimble riggers had, of course, been necessarily excluded, but we fear it was not possible to shut out all those persons whose recollection of the laws of *meum* and *tuum* was somewhat blunted. We heard of numerous losses of small sums, and of handkerchiefs and other trifles, but, throughout the day, we gained no information of any robbery which was of sufficient extent

to produce more than a temporary inconvenience to the person robbed. A temporary police station was erected in the grounds, in which Mr. Mallalieu and a considerable portion of his men were in attendance during the day; but, although there were, necessarily, some cases in which slight acts of intemperance were visible, nothing of any serious importance occurred during the whole of the early part of the day.

“The orderly conduct of the people, which we have already described as having been observable during the morning, was maintained through the rest of the day. Notwithstanding that the crowd, at three o’clock, had increased tenfold, no disturbance nor riot occurred. The return of Her Majesty attracted a few from the crowd, but nearly every one returned, and all remained for the grand attraction of this part of the day’s amusement – the fireworks. As evening closed in, the fatigue of the people rendered rest, as well as refreshment, necessary, and every booth was, in a short time, crowded with eager inquiries for eatables and drinkables. The dancing booths were crowded to suffocation, and the viands of the purveyors of grog were soon put into requisition.”

The next day was stormy and wet at first, but afterwards turned out fine, and the Fair was crowded. On the third day, a booth caught fire, but no great damage was done. On the fourth, and last day, the Queen drove as close to it as she well could do, and all the booths were cleared away that night.

The Marquis of Waterford still continued his mad pranks, and

he was brought before Mr. Dyer, the Magistrate at Marlborough Street, on 30 June, charged with being drunk and disorderly in Piccadilly at 5 o'clock in the morning.

Policeman Ellis, C 91, saw the Marquis, with two or three other persons and a woman in his cab, driving down the Haymarket, and committing the insane freak of making the foot pavement his road. The policeman had no hope of overtaking the Marquis, from the speed at which his lordship was driving; he, however, followed as fast as he could, and, when the Marquis turned into Piccadilly, he saw his lordship again pull his horse on the pavement, and drive on, to the imminent danger of foot passengers. The cab went against some posts, and this brought the horse to a standstill. The policeman ran up, and after much difficulty and opposition on the part of the Marquis's friends, he succeeded in lodging his lordship in the station house. His lordship was too drunk to allow his being enlarged on bail.

In explanation, the Marquis said he had a young horse in his cab, which was very difficult to drive. The animal, having a heavy load behind him, became unmanageable, and went, in spite of all he could do, on the pavement.

The policeman, in the most positive manner, said he saw the Marquis pull his horse upon the foot pavement, and whip the animal to make him go the faster.

The Marquis declared, "upon his honour," he did not go more than five yards upon the pavement.

The policeman declared the Marquis drove about 100 yards

on the pavement in the Haymarket, and about 100 yards more upon the pavement in Piccadilly. The concussion against the post was so great, that the woman was thrown six yards out of the cab.

Marquis: I was thrown out myself. The fact is, I consider this charge to be quite unwarranted. No one was hurt, and the policeman exceeded his duty in taking me to the station house.

Mr. Dyer: The policeman states you were intoxicated.

Marquis: Why, I had been about all night, and I don't think I was very sober.

Policeman: You had your collar and shirt open, and your chest was quite exposed.

Marquis: I was dressed just as I am at present.

Policeman: Your coat is now buttoned up; it was not so when I took you in charge. You said, when I took you, you would defy your brother to drive your horse.

Marquis: I might have said so because none of my brothers are in town. But the horse is only four years old, has never had a collar on before, and I'll defy any man to drive him the length of this street.

Mr. Dyer: It was the more imprudent on your lordship's part to bring such an unsafe animal into the public streets, especially at the present time, when the streets are more than usually thronged. Have you any witnesses?

Marquis: Yes, I can bring them, but I had rather not.

Mr. Dyer: If they can allege anything in contradiction of the charge of wilful driving on the footpath, I am willing to hear it.

Marquis: No. It will be a fine, I suppose, and I had rather pay it than trouble my friends to come forward. I'll call my horse, if your Worship thinks proper.

Mr. Dyer then inflicted a fine of 40s.

The Marquis paid the money, and, turning to the policeman, made some unhandsome remarks on his evidence.

Mr. Dyer said the policeman bore an excellent character, and, as far as the magistrates could judge, had always done his duty fairly and respectably.

The Marquis took the arm of his friend, the Earl of Waldegrave, and left the office.

We hear of him again very shortly afterwards, for on 31 July, at Derby assizes, came on an indictment charging the Marquis of Waterford, Sir F. Johnstone, Hon. A. C. H. Villiers, and E. H. Reynard, Esq., with a riot and assault. On the 5th April were the Croxton Park races, about five miles distance from Melton Mowbray. The four defendants had been dining out at Melton on the evening of that day; and about two in the morning of the following day, the watchmen on duty, hearing a noise, proceeded to the Market Place, and near Lord Rosebery's house saw several gentlemen attempting to overturn a caravan, a man being inside; the watchmen succeeded in preventing this, when the Marquis of Waterford challenged one of them to fight, which the watchmen declined. Subsequently, hearing a noise in the direction of the toll bar, they proceeded thither, and found the gate keeper had been screwed up in his house, and he had been calling out "Murder!"

On coming up with the gentlemen a second time, it was observed that they had a pot of red paint with them, while one carried a paint brush, which one of the constables wrested from the hand of the person who held it; but, subsequently, they surrounded the man, threw him on his back, and painted his face and neck with red paint. They then continued their games, painting the doors and windows of different persons; and, when one of their companions (Mr. Reynard) was put in the lock up, they forced the constable to give up the keys, and succeeded in getting him out. The jury found the defendants (who were all identified as having taken part in the affray) guilty of the common assault, and they were sentenced to pay a fine of £100 each, and to be imprisoned till such fine be paid.

Motor cars are not the modern invention we are apt to imagine them, except as regards the power used – which, until lately, was always steam. As far back as 1769, a Frenchman, named Cugnot, made a steam carriage which carried four people, and attained a speed of two and a quarter miles an hour! But it was unfortunate to its inventor – for it came to grief in a street in Paris, and the unhappy man was imprisoned. In England our engineers exercised their inventive power in making steam carriages – Murdock in 1782, Watt in 1784, Symington in 1786 – and others made models, but the first which actually ran in England was made by Trevithick and Vivian in 1803, and this, in the streets of London (which were very far from being as good as they are now), attained a speed of eight or nine

miles an hour. Between the years 1827–34 there were numerous steam carriages built and tried, proving more or less successful. One made by Sir Goldsworthy Gurney ran for three months in 1831 with passengers between Cheltenham and Gloucester, while Hancock's steam omnibuses (carrying 14 to 16 passengers) ran in London pretty constantly during the years 1833–36, and often at a speed of 10 or 12 miles an hour; some of his coaches ran long journeys, such as from London to Brighton, and he was the most successful of all inventors in this line, unless we except Scott Russell, who, in 1834, ran six steam coaches between Glasgow and Paisley.

We read in the *Standard* of 21 June, 1838, that “Yesterday afternoon, Hyde Park presented a more than usually gay appearance, in consequence of a crowd of fashionables being assembled to witness the trial of a newly-constructed steam cab. Among the many splendid equipages were observed those of the Dowager Duchess of Sutherland, the Marquis of Salisbury, the Marquis of Northampton, the Earl of Winchilsea, Lord Howick, Lord Holland, and many other distinguished personages. About 3 o'clock the object of attraction moved forward at a slow pace from the old Foot Guard Barracks, Knightsbridge, and threaded its way through the various vehicles into the Park, passing through the centre gate of the triumphal arch, and making, in the open space opposite the statue, several turns within its own length. The vehicle after the date hereof, will render themselves liable to be hours round the Park, and, from the slight noise it

made, the horses passing did not appear to be frightened. The average speed of the cab was about twelve miles an hour. The vehicle was guided by Mr. Hancock, the inventor.”

But, if mechanical science had advanced as far as motor cars, we were, in other ways, still as backward as Belgium and Germany are at the present, in using dogs as draught animals. This practice had increased to such an extent that it was found necessary to placard the walls of the metropolis with the following notice. “Notice is hereby given, that all persons using dogs under carts or trucks, as beasts of burden, after the date hereof, will render themselves liable to be prosecuted, and fined £2, according to the provisions of an obsolete Act lately discovered. London, 18 Aug., 1838.” This scandal did not last long, for in “an Act for further improving the Police in and near the Metropolis,” 2 and 3 Vict., c. 47 [17 Aug., 1839], we find that Section LVI. says, “And be it enacted, That after the First Day of *January* next, every person who, within the Metropolitan Police District, shall use any Dog for the purpose of drawing, or helping to draw any Cart, Carriage, Truck, or Barrow, shall be liable to a penalty of not more than Forty Shillings for the first offence, and not more than Five Pounds for the Second, or any following offence.” This act was extended to all parts of the Kingdom by the 17 and 18 Vict., c. 60.

On the 13th July the Corporation of the City of London gave a grand banquet, at the Guildhall, to the foreign Princes, Ambassadors extraordinary, and *Corps Diplomatique*, then in the

metropolis, in honour of the Queen's Coronation; and in order to completely divest the occasion of anything like a political aspect, care was taken to invite, besides the Ministers, an equal number of the *élite* of both parties in the State. The principal guests went in their state carriages, and the streets were crowded with sightseers who especially welcomed the Duke of Wellington and Marshal Sout. The arrangements and decorations in the Hall were almost the same as those used for the Royal banquet in the previous November, the tables and sideboards were ablaze with plate lent by the various City Companies, and the General Bill of Fare was as follows:

One hundred and twenty tureens of turtle soup, of five pints each; 17 dishes of fish, consisting of salmon, turbot, whittings, tench and eels; 40 haunches of venison; 80 dishes of fowls, capons and pullets; 40 cherry, gooseberry and currant tarts; 30 strawberry tarts; 40 dishes of potatoes; 60 dishes of French beans; 30 French pies; 30 pigeon pies; 30 hams; 30 tongues; 2 barons of beef; 37 Chantilly baskets; 30 dishes of peas; 10 sirloins, ribs and rumps of beef; 45 dishes of shell fish; 30 ribs, chines and legs of lamb; 40 dishes of ducklings; 20 turkey poults; 80 jellies; 20 creams; 40 salads and cucumbers; 20 dishes of cauliflowers. Dessert. – Seventy-five pine apples of 2lbs each; 100 dishes of hothouse grapes; 20 melons; 30 dishes of cherries; 100 dishes of strawberries; 40 dishes of currants and gooseberries; 120 cream and water ices, various; 40 dishes of dried fruit; 35 ornamented Savoy cakes; 30 dishes of preserves, biscuits and olives.

Marshal Soult stopped for some time in England, and visited many of the manufacturing towns.

CHAPTER VII

Genesis of "The Charter" – L. & N. W. Railway opened to Birmingham – Overland route to India – A bold smuggler – Bull baiting – Visitors to the Queen – "The Boy Jones."

Probably nearly all my readers have heard of the "Chartists," but it is equally probable that few know when the agitation commenced, and the reason for its existence. The "Charter," as it was called, was the Radical outcome of the Reform Bill of 1832. For a time, after the passing of that Bill, the land had peace, for all reasonable reforms had been granted, but the demagogues were not going to be quietly annihilated, and an agitation for more trenchant reform was got up, and a mass meeting in its favour was held at Birmingham, on the 6th of August, and at it were inaugurated the principles of "The People's Charter," as it was called. It is currently reported that this "Charter" was drawn up by William Lovett, a carpenter and cabinet maker, who took an active part in getting rid of the stamp tax upon newspapers; and it is very likely that it was so, for he drew up most of the petitions and addresses for the movement, and, in connection with it, he, the following year, suffered 12 months' imprisonment. He died Aug. 1877. The demands of this "Charter" were six, and they were familiarly known as the six points. They were:

Universal Suffrage.

Vote by Ballot.

Annual Parliaments.

Payment of the Members.

Abolition of the Property Qualification.

Equal Electoral Districts.

The meeting was got up by T. Atwood, Esq., M.P., and the site chosen for it was a large vacant piece of ground, at Birmingham, on the north-west side of the town, and there drinking booths galore were erected. The morning began very wet, and the different divisions from the neighbouring country marched bemired and bedraggled to the rendezvous. There they soon filled the drinking booths, in which they abode; hence, probably, the very diverse statements as to the numbers present at the meeting, which vary from 10,000 to 200,000. The ground chosen was a natural amphitheatre, and, if the weather had been finer, it would have been a pretty sight, enlivened by the bright banners of the different Trades' Societies. However, Mr. Atwood read the Petition, which embodied the above six points, and moved its adoption. Feargus O'Connor, a well-known firebrand, seconded it in a violent speech, in which occurred the following balderdash.

“On with your green standard rearing,

Go, flesh every sword to the hilt;

On our side is Virtue and Erin,

On yours is the *parson* and guilt.”

Of course the Motion was enthusiastically carried, and then a very heavy shower of rain terminated the proceedings. The petition was afterwards presented to Parliament by Mr. Atwood on the 14th of June, 1839.

On 17th Sept the London and North Western Railway (then called the London and Birmingham Rly.) was opened throughout to Birmingham; the first train, containing Directors and their friends, leaving Euston at 7.15 a.m. The times of this train are useful for comparing with the present time. "The train left Euston at 15 minutes past 7, but did not take on locomotive until 20 minutes past. It arrived at Tring station at 25 minutes past 8, where there was five minutes' delay. Arrived at Wolverton at 6 minutes past 9, where the directors alighted and changed engines. The train arrived at Rugby at 11 o'clock, where the Duke of Sussex and his suite alighted, and proceeded by carriage to the place of his destination. The directors remained at Rugby 10 minutes, and arrived at Birmingham 3 minutes past 12, having performed the whole journey, including stoppages, in 4 hours 48 minutes, and, exclusive of stoppages, in 4 hours 14 minutes. This is, unquestionably, the shortest time in which the journey from London to Birmingham has ever been performed, being upwards of two hours less than the time occupied by Marshal Soult and attendants a few weeks ago."

"The fare for one person from London to Birmingham, or back, by the 'four inside' carriages, by day, or the first class,

'six inside' by night, will be £1 12s. 6d; by the second-class carriages, open by day, which is the cheapest, it will be £1. The intermediate fares will be £1 10s. and £1 5s."

It is not generally known that the two lodges at the entrance of Euston Station, were the original ticket office and waiting room.

People were beginning to wake from the torpor in which they had hitherto slumbered, with regard to locomotion, and on 12th October an influential meeting of merchants and others was held at the Jerusalem Coffee House to hear a Captain Barber unfold his scheme for a quicker communication with India. This was that passengers and goods should be taken by steam to Cairo, and thence, by omnibuses and vans to Suez – as was afterwards done by Waghorn, who was already forming an Overland Mail (see *Times*, 29 Nov., 1838).

With the very heavy duties on foreign goods, of course smuggling was very rife, and the Inland Revenue was defrauded on every possible occasion by the sharp wits opposed to it; and the difficulty of conviction, unless the smuggler was caught red-handed, was very considerable. The following is a case in point, and for sheer impudence, it bears the palm. 17 Oct.:

Mansion House. – A Scotchwoman, named Frances Bodmore, the wife of a Frenchman, who has been engaged in smuggling, appeared to answer for her husband, on a charge of having two two-gallon bottles of French brandy in his possession, without having paid the duty thereon.

Child, the constable, said he went into the house of the

Frenchman, in Sugarloaf Court; and, while searching for other things, found the bottles under the pillows of the bed.

The Lord Mayor: Why don't your husband attend?

Woman: Why, because he knows nothing at all about the business. I think he'd be a great fool to come here without knowing for what.

The Lord Mayor: How do you get your living?

Woman: Why, as well as I can. I don't get it without running some risk for it, you may depend.

The Lord Mayor: We know you to be a consummate smuggler.

Woman: Whatever my business may be, I generally get through it like a trump. There's no nonsense about me.

The Lord Mayor (to the Revenue officer): She is constantly backward and forward between this and France, I daresay.

Woman: Yes, my Lord, I travel a good deal for the benefit of my health, and I always come back stouter than I go. (Laughter.)

Officer: She's perfectly well known, my Lord, as one of a number that are commissioned by parties in London. They are all very clever, and elude us in every possible way, and the steamers afford them great facilities.

The Lord Mayor: I can't send this woman to prison, and she knows it well, but I shall punish every experienced smuggler I catch as severely as I can. They cheat the fair trader, they endanger the vessel in which they come over, and they cheat the Government.

Woman: Ay, my Lord, that's the cleverest thing of

all. Only think of cheating the Government! Well, well, I wonder where the villainy of man will end! (Laughter.)

The Lord Mayor: Take care of yourself. You think you are secure. You may go now.

Woman: Good morning, my Lord. Although you are so kind, I hope I shall never have the pleasure of seeing your face again.

The Lord Mayor was informed that great quantities of lace were brought over by women. Some had been found stitched up in the skins of wildfowl, and there was scarcely an article, dead or alive, that was not suspected of being a depository of contraband goods. It was but a short time ago, that a wretched-looking object was discovered to be the carrier of a large stock of lace. He had an old bedstead, which, in his trips to Boulogne, he used to take with him. At last, somebody on board expressed his surprise, why a ricketty piece of furniture, which looked as if it was the tenement of living animals, should be so frequent a passenger. Upon close examination, it was found that the several pieces of the bedstead had been hollowed and stuffed with lace.

The cruel old English sport of bull baiting was still continued at Stamford, in Lincolnshire, where it is said to have existed since the year 1209, in the reign of King John. The story goes that, in that year, William, Earl Warren, lord of the town, standing on the walls of his castle, saw two bulls fighting for a cow, in the castle meadow, till all the butchers dogs pursued one of the bulls (maddened by the noise and multitude) clean through the town.

This sight so pleased the Earl, that he gave the castle meadow, where the bulls' duel began, for a common, to the butchers of the town, after the first grass was mown, on condition that they should find a mad bull the day six weeks before Christmas Day – for the continuation of that sport, for ever.

But the time had come for putting an end to this barbarous practice, and it was this year put down by direct interference of the Secretary of State. At Stamford, and elsewhere, it was believed that this bull baiting was legal, being established by custom; but the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, with a view of setting the question at rest by the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench, caused an indictment to be preferred against several of the ringleaders. The indictment was tried at Lincoln, before Mr. Justice Park and a special jury, when several of them were found guilty; and, upon their being brought up for judgment in the Court of Queen's Bench, the Court unanimously declared the practice to be illegal; the Chief Justice, in particular, said: "It was supposed there was some matter of law – at first, there was a supposed old Charter – for the future, it must be considered as an illegal practice."

In consequence of this decision, a troop of the 14th Dragoons, together with 12 Metropolitan policemen, were sent into the town of Stamford. Placards, apprising the public of the illegality of the bull baiting, were posted in the town and neighbourhood, and the threatened and attempted repetition of this barbarous scene was prevented without any loss of life or serious injury. The

bullards (as they were called) mustered in strong numbers. They had provided two fierce bulls to be hunted and tormented; but the bulls were seized and pounded by the police; and, although the ruffian mob remained in considerable numbers, no serious breach of the peace took place. But they were determined not to be altogether balked of their *sport*; for a bull calf, enclosed in a cart, and followed by its lowing mother, entered the town, and was immediately seized on as a substitute for a bull. It was taken out, and hunted through the town for some time, until rescued by the police.

Every lunatic seems to have wanted to say something to the young Queen, and visitors to Buckingham Palace were very frequent, although the object of their wishes was never attained. To show the nuisance involved by these fools let me give one paragraph out of the *Times*, 19 Dec.:

Visitors to Her Majesty. – On Saturday night, about 9 o'clock, a very respectably dressed young man rang the bell at the tradesmen's entrance of the new Palace, and, upon being asked the nature of his business, he said he had come for the direction of his house, as he was tired, and wished to go home. Upon being asked to explain himself, he said he had just come from Sydney, and had been desired to call at the Palace by the Queen, who told him he should have a house to live in, and £150 a year, for some very important spiritual communication he had made to her. The young man, whose every action showed he was a lunatic, was then told the Queen was not in town, when he turned

away, observing that he would go immediately to Lord Hill, and lay his case before him. Visits of the preceding kind are very frequent at the Palace, and the tales told by the visitants are of the very strangest nature. It is only a few weeks since, an elderly man, having the appearance of a farmer, called at the Palace, and handing to the porter the certificate of his birth, requested him to let Her Majesty sign it. From inquiries made concerning this man, it was discovered that he was a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood of Exeter, from which distant place he had wandered on so strange an errand.

But of all visitors to the Royal Palace, the Boy Jones was the most frequent and successful. Who, in this generation, knows anything about the Boy Jones? Yet his escapades were very daring and his story is very true – but so strange is it that, in order to be believed, I must, at least, in part, give the chapter and verse for it:

The Times, 15 Dec.:

Queen Square. – Yesterday, a lad about 15 years of age, who gave his name as Edward Cotton, whose dress was that of a sweep, but who was stated to be the son of a respectable tradesman in Hertfordshire, was charged with being found in the Marble hall of Buckingham Palace, under circumstances of an extraordinary nature. It should be stated that Buckingham Palace, even during the absence of the Queen, is guarded by the gentlemen porters of the establishment, two inspectors of the A division of police, and sentries from the Foot Guards. In spite of this, a

number of cases have lately occurred at this office, where persons have been found in the interior of the Palace under unaccountable circumstances.

George Cox, one of the porters, having been sworn, said, that at five o'clock yesterday morning he saw the prisoner in the Marble hall. The latter endeavoured to make his escape into the lobby, but he pursued him, and he then took a contrary direction, across the lawn at the back of the Palace. Witness called for the sentry at the gate, and a policeman of the B Division who was on duty in James Street, caught the lad, after a long chase over the lawn. Mr. Cox added, that he found, in the lobby, a regimental sword, a quantity of linen, and other articles, all of which had been purloined from the Palace. The sword was the property of the Hon. Augustus Murray, a gentleman attached to the Queen's establishment. Witness went into that gentleman's bedroom, and the bedding was covered with soot. The prisoner had, evidently, endeavoured to get up the chimney, in order to effect his escape; there was a valuable likeness of Her Majesty, in the Marble hall, which was broken, and covered with soot; and it was supposed that the lad, in the first instance, had descended from the top of the building, and had endeavoured to make his way back again in the same manner.

James Stone, 31 B, deposed that he was called upon by the last witness to secure the prisoner. There were marks of soot in several of the bedchambers, as well as in one of the corridors of the Palace, and the Grand (or Marble) hall. He found upon him two letters, one addressed to Her Majesty,

and the other to the Hon. Mr. Murray. These letters had been placed underneath Her Majesty's portrait, and had, no doubt, been taken by the prisoner at the time the picture was destroyed. Part of the scabbard of the sword was discovered in one of the beds, and a quantity of bear's grease, part of which he had placed upon his flesh, was taken from him – it belonged to one of the servants of the Palace. Upon being taken to the station house, he said he came from Hertfordshire, and that his father was a respectable man.

Mr. White, the sitting magistrate, observed that it was a most extraordinary thing that persons could get into the Palace under such circumstances.

Several persons belonging to the Palace said that every inquiry had been made, but it could not be accounted for.

Mr. White (to the prisoner): Where do you come from?

Prisoner: I came from Hertfordshire 12 months ago, and I met with a man in a fustian jacket, who asked me to go with him to Buckingham House. I went, and have been there ever since. I got my victuals in the kitchen, and I thought myself very well off, because I came to London to better myself.

Mr. White: Well, you could not go to a higher place.

Prisoner: I declare it to be the case, and I lived very well. To be sure, I was obliged to wash my shirt now and then.

Mr. White: You fared, then, altogether, pretty well?

Prisoner: Very well indeed, Sir, and I was always placed, when the Queen had a meeting with the Ministers, behind a piece of furniture in the room; but I, certainly, did live well.

Mr. White: Indeed! And which was your favourite apartment?

Prisoner: The room in front of the gardens; but I was always in the secret when the Ministers came.

Mr. White: Do you mean to tell me that you have lived in the Palace upwards of 11 months, and been concealed when Her Majesty held a Council?

Prisoner: I do.

Mr. White: Were you hid behind a chair?

Prisoner: No. But the tables and other furniture concealed me.

Mr. White: Then you could hear all Her Majesty said?

Prisoner: Oh, yes! and her Ministers too.

The prisoner's answers to the questions of the magistrate were given in the most shrewd manner possible, and he evidently appeared to be a lad of some education, but nothing further could be elicited from him.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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