

THE HOUSE-WARMING: A LEGEND OF BLEEDING HEART YARD

Did you ever see the Devil dance? — OLD QUERY.

Sir Christopher Hatton he danced with grace,
He'd a very fine form and a very fine face,
And his cloak and his doublet were guarded with lace,
And the rest of his clothes,
As you well may suppose,
In taste were by no means inferior to those;
He'd a yellow-starched ruff,
And his gloves were of buff,
On each of his shoes a red heel and a rose,
And nice little moustaches under his nose;
Then every one knows
How he turned out his toes,
And a very great way that accomplishment goes,
In a Court where it's thought, in a lord or a duke, a
Disgrace to fall short in "the Brawls" — (their Cachouca).
So what with his form, and what with his face,
And what with his velvet cloak guarded with lace,
And what with his elegant dancing and grace,
His dress and address
So tickled Queen Bess
That her Majesty gave him a very snug place;
And seeing, moreover, at one single peep, her
Advisers were, few of them, sharper or deeper
(Old Burleigh excepted), she made him Lord Keeper!

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I've heard, I confess, with no little surprise,
English history called a farrago of lies;
And a certain Divine,
A connexion of mine,
Who ought to know better, as some folks opine,
Is apt to declare,
Leaning back in his chair,
With a sort of a smirking, self-satisfied air,
That "all that's recorded in Hume, and elsewhere,
"Of our early '*Annales*'
A trumpery tale is,
"Like the 'bold Captain Smith's,' and the 'Luckless Miss Bayley's' —
"That old Roger Hoveden, and Ralph de Diceto,
"And others (whose names should I try to repeat o-
"ver, well I'm assured you would put in your veto),
"Though all holy friars,
"Were very great liars,

“And raised stories faster than Grissel and Peto —
“That Harold escaped with the loss of a ‘glim’ —
“— That the shaft which killed Rufus ne’er glanced from a limb
“Of a tree, as they say, but was aimed slap at *him*, —
“That Fair Rosamond never was poisoned or spitted,
“But outlived Queen Nell, who was much to be pitied; —
“That Nelly her namesake, Ned Longshanks’s wife,
“Ne’er went crusading at all in her life,
“Nor suck’d the wound made by the poison-tipped knife!
“For as she,
“O’er the sea,
“Towards far Galilee,
“Never, even in fancy, march’d carcass or shook shanks,
“Of course she could no more suck Longshanks than Cruikshanks,
“But, leaving her spindle-legged liege-lord to roam,
“Stayed behind, and suck’d something much better at home, —
“That it’s quite as absurd
“To say Edward the Third,
“In reviving the Garter, afforded a handle
“For any Court-gossip, detraction, or scandal,
“As ‘twould be to say
“That at Court t’other day,
“As the fête which the newspapers say was so gay,
“His Great Representative then stole away
“Lady Salisbury’s garters as part of the play,—
“—That as to Prince Hal’s being taken to jail,
“By the London Police, without mainprize or bail,
“For cuffing a judge,
“It’s a regular fudge;
“And that Chief-Justice Gascoigne, it’s very well known,
“Was kicked out the moment he came to the throne,—
“—Then that Richard the Third was a ‘marvellous proper man’ —
“Never killed, injured, or wrong’d of a copper, man! —
“Ne’er wished to smother
“The sons of his brother, —
“Nor ever stuck Harry the Sixth, who, instead
“Of being squabashed, as in Shakspeare we’ve read,
“Caught a bad influenza, and died in his bed,
“In the Tower, not far from the room where the Guard is
“(The octagon one that adjoins Duffus Hardy’s);
“— That, in short, all the ‘facts’ in the *Decem Scriptores*,
“Are nothing at all but sheer humbugging stories.”

Then if, as he vows, both this country and France in,
Historians thus gave themselves up to Romancing,
Notwithstanding what most of them join in advancing
Respecting Sir Christopher’s capering and prancing,
’Twill cause no surprise
If we find that his rise

Is *not* to be solely ascribed to his dancing!
 The fact is, Sir Christopher, early in life,
 As all bachelors should do, had taken a wife,
 A Fanshawe by family, — one of a house
 Well descended, but boasting less “nobles” than *nous*;
 Though e’en as to purse
 He might have done worse,
 For I find, on perusing her Grandfather’s will, it is
 Clear she had “good gifts beside possibilities,”
 Owches and rings,
 And such sort of things,
 Orellana shares (then the American Stocks),
 Jewell’d stomachers, coifs, ruffs, silk-stockings with clocks,
 Point-lace, cambric handkerchiefs, nightcaps, and — socks —
 (Recondite apparel contained in her box),
 — Then the height of her breeding
 And depth of her reading
 Might captivate any gay youth, and, in leading
 Him on to “propose,” well excuse the proceeding:
 Truth to tell, as to “reading,” the Lady was thought to do
 More than she should, and know more than she ought to do;
 Her maid, it was said,
 Declared that she read
 (A custom all staid folks discourage) in bed;
 And that often o’ nights
 Odd noises and sights
 In her mistress’s chamber had giv’n her sad frights,
 After all in the mansion had put out their lights,
 And she verily thought that hobgoblins and sprites
 Were there, kicking up all sorts of devil’s delights; —
 Miss Alice, in short, was supposed to “collogue” — I
 Don’t much like the word — with the subtle old rogue, I
 ’ve heard call’d by so many names — one of them’s “Bogy” —
 Indeed ‘twas conceived,
 And by most folks believed,
 — A thing at which all of her well-wishers griev’d —
 That should she incline to play such a vagary,
 Like sage Lady Branhholm, her contempo-rary,
 (Excuse the false quantity, reader, I pray),
 She could turn a knight into a waggon of hay,
 Or two nice little boys into puppies at play,
Raison de plus, not a doubt could exist of her
 Pow’r to turn “Kit Hatton” into “Sir Christopher;”
 But what “mighty magic,” or strong “conjunction,”
 Whether love-powder, philtre, or other potation
 She used, I confess, I’m unable to guess, —
 Much less to express
 By what skill and address
 She “cut and contrived” with such signal success,

As we Londoners say, to “inwiggle” Queen Bess,
Inasmuch as I lack heart
To study the Black Art;
Be that as it may, — it’s as clear as the sun,
That, however she did it, ’twas certainly done!

Now, they’re all very well, titles, honour, and rank,
Still we can’t but admit, if we choose to be frank,
There’s no harm in a snug little sum in the Bank!
An old proverb says,
“Pudding still before praise!”
An adage well known I’ve no doubt in those days,
And George Colman the Younger, in one of his plays,
Makes one of his characters loudly declare
That “a Lord without money,” — I quote from his “Heir-
At-Law” — ” ’s but a poor wishy-washy affair!” —
In her subsequent conduct I think we can see a
Strong proof the Dame entertain’d some such idea,
For, once in the palace,
We find Lady Alice
Again playing tricks with her Majesty’s chalice
In the way that the jocose, in
Our days, term “hocussing;”
The liquor she used, as I’ve said, she kept close,
But, whatever it was, she now doubled the dose!
(So true is the saying,
“We never can stay, in
Our progress, when once with the foul fiend we league us.”)
— She “doctor’d” the punch, and she “doctor’d” the negus,
Taking care not to put in sufficient to flavour it,
Till, at every fresh sip
That moisten’d her lip,
The Virgin Queen grew more attach’d to her Favourite.

“No end” now he commands
Of money and lands,
And, as George Robins says, when he’s writing about houses,
“Messuages, tenements, crofts, tofts, and outhouses,”
Parks, manors, chases, She “gives and she grants,
To him and his heirs, and his uncles and aunts;”
Whatever he wants, he has only to ask it,
And all other suitors are “left in the basket,”
Till Dudley and Rawleigh Began to look squally,
While even grave Cecil, the famous Lord Burleigh,
Himself, “shook his head,” and grew snappish and surly.
All this was fine sport,
As our authors report,
To dame Alice, become a great Lady at Court,
Where none than her Ladyship’s husband look’d bigger,

Who “led the brawls” still with the same grace and vigour,
 Though losing a little in slimness and figure;
 For eating and drinking all day of the best
 Of viands well drest,
 With “Burgess’s Zest,”
 Is apt, by degrees, to enlarge a man’s vest;
 And, what in Sir Christopher went to increase it, he
 ’d always been rather inclined to obesity;
 — Few men in those times were found to grow thinner
 With beefsteaks for breakfast and pork-pie for dinner.

Now it’s really a difficult problem to say
 How long matters might have gone on in this way,
 If it had not unluckily happened one day
 That NICK, — who, because He’d the gout in his claws,
 And his hoofs — (he’s by no means so young as he was,
 And is subject of late to a sort of rheumatic a-
 -ttack that partakes both of gout and sciatica,) —
 All the night long had twisted and grinn’d,
 His pains much increased by an easterly wind,
 Which always compels him to hobble and limp,
 Was strongly advised by his Medical Imp
 To lie by a little, and give over work,
 For he’d lately been slaving away like a Turk,
 On the Guinea-coast, helping to open a brave trade
 In Niggers, with Hawkins who founded the slave-trade,
 So he call’d for his ledger, the constant resource
 Of your Mercantile folk, when they’re “not in full force;”
 — If a cold or catarrh makes them husky and hoarse,
 Or a touch of gout keeps them away from “the BOURSE,”
 They look over their books as a matter of course.

Now scarce had Nick turn’d over one page, or two,
 Ere a prominent *item* attracted his view,
 A Bill! — that had now been some days overdue,
 From one Alice Hatton, *née* Fanshawe — a name
 Which you’ll recognise, reader, at once as the same
 With that borne by Sir Christopher’s erudite dame!
 The signature — much more *prononcée* than pink,
 Seem’d written in blood — but it might be red ink —
 While the rest of the deed
 He proceeded to read,
 Like ev’ry “bill, bond, or acquittance” whose date is
 Three hundred years old, ran in Latin, — “*Sciatis*
 (*Diaboli?*) *omnes ad quos hæc pervenient*” —
 — But courage, dear Reader, I mean to be lenient,
 And scorn to inflict on you half the “Law-reading”
 I picked up “umquhile” in three days’ Special-pleading,
 Which cost me — a theme I’ll not pause to digress on —

Just thirty-three pounds six-and-eightpence a lesson —
“As I’m stout, I’ll be merciful,” therefore, and sparing
All those technicalities, end by declaring
The Deed so correct
As to make one suspect,
(Were it possible any such person could go there)
Old Nick had a Special Attorney below there:
’Twas so fram’d and express’d no tribunal could shake it,
And firm as red wax and *black* ferret could make it.

By the roll of his eye
As Old Nick put it by,
It was clear he had made up his mind what to do
In respect to the course he should have to pursue,
When his hoof would allow him to put on a shoe!!

No, although the Lord Keeper held under the crown, house
And land in the country — he’d never a Town-house,
And, as we have seen, His course always had been,
When he wanted a thing, to solicit the Queen,
So now, in the hope of a fresh acquisition,
He danced off to Court with his “Humble Petition.”

“Please your Majesty’s Grace, I have not a place
“I can well put my head in, to dine, sup, or sleep!
“Your Grace’s Lord Keeper has nowhere to *keep*,
“So I beg and intreat,
“At your Majesty’s feet,
“That your Grace will be graciously pleas’d for to say,
“With as little delay
“ As your Majesty may,
“Where your Majesty’s Grace’s Lord Keeper’s to stay —
“— And your Grace’s Petitioner ever will pray!”

The Queen, when she heard
This petition preferred,
Gave ear to Sir Christopher’s suit at a word; —
“Odds Bobs, my good Lord!” was her gracious reply,
“I don’t know, not I,
“Any good reason why
“A Lord Keeper, like you, should not always be nigh
“To advise — and devise — and revise — our supply —
“A House! we’re surprised that the thing did not strike
“Us before — Yes! — of course! — Pray, whose House would you like?
“When I *do* things of this kind, I do them genteelly,
“A House? — let me see! there’s the Bishop of Ely!
“A capital mansion, I’m told, the proud knave is in,
“Up there in Holborn, just opposite Thavies’ Inn —
“Where the Strawberries grow so fine and so big,

“Which our Grandmother’s Uncle tucked in like a pig,
“King Richard the Third, which you all must have read of —
“The day, — don’t you know? — he cut Hastings’ head off —
“And mark me, proud Prelate! — I’m speaking to you,
“Bishop Heaton! — you need not, my lord, look so blue —
“Give it up on the instant! I don’t mean to shock you,
“Or else by ——! — (The Bishop *was* shocked!) — I’ll unfrock you!!”

The Queen turns abruptly her back on the group,
The Courtiers all bow as she passes, and stoop
To kiss, as she goes, the hind flounce of her hoop,
And Sir Christopher, having thus danced to some tune,
Skips away with much glee in his best rigadon!
While poor Bishop Heaton,
Who found himself beaten,
In serious alarm at the Queen’s contumelious
And menacing tone, at once gave him up Ely House,
With every appurtenance thereto belonging,
Including the strawberry beds ’twas so strong in;
Politely he bow’d to the gratified minion,
And said, “There can be, my good lord, in opinion
No difference betwixt yours
And mine as to fixtures,
And tables, and chairs —
We need no survey’rs—
Take them just as you find them, without reservation,
Grates, coppers, and all, at your own valuation!”

Well! the object is gain’d!
A good Town-house obtained!
The next thing to be thought of, is now
The “house-warming” party — the *when* and the *how* —
The Court ladies call,
One and all, great and small,
For an elegant “Spread,” and more elegant Ball,
So, Sir Christopher, vain as we know of his capering,
No sooner had finished his painting and papering,
Than he sat down and wrote
A nice little pink note
To every great Lord, whom he knew, and his spouse,
“From our poor place on Holborn-hill (late Ely House),
“Lord Keeper and Dame Alice Hatton request
“Lord So-and-so’s (name, style, or title exprest)
“Good company on
“The next Eve of St. John,
“Viz.: Friday week, June 24th, as their guest,
“To partake of pot-luck,
“And taste a fat buck.
“N.B. Venison on table exactly at 3,

“Quadrilles in the afternoon, R. S. V. P.
“For my good Lord of So-and-so these, and his wife;
“Ride! ride! for thy life! for thy life! for thy life!”
Thus courtiers were wont to indorse their expresses
In Harry the VIIIth’s time, and also Queen Bess’s.
The Dame, for her part, too, took order that cards
Should be sent to the mess-rooms of all the Hussards,
The Household troops, Train-bands, and horse and foot Guards.

Well, the day for the rout
At length came about,
And the bells of St. Andrew’s rang merrily out,
As horse-litter, coach, and pad-nag, with its pillion,
(The mode of conveyance then used by the “Million,”)
All gallant and grand,
Defiled from the Strand,
Some through Chancery (then an unpaved and much wetter) Lane,
Others through Shoe (which was not a whit better) Lane;
Others through Fewtar’s (corrupted to Fetter) Lane;
Some from Cheapside, and St. Mary-le-Bow,
From Bishopsgate Street, Dowgate Hill, and Budge Row.
They come and they go,
Squire and Dame, Belle and Beau,
Down Snore Hill (which we have since whitewashed to Snow),
All eager to see the magnificent show,
And sport what some call “a fantastical toe;”
In silk and in satin,
To batten and fatten
Upon the good cheer of Sir Christopher Hatton.

A flourish, trumpets! — sound again! —
He comes, bold Drake, the chief who made a
Fine hash of all the pow’rs of Spain,
And so serv’d out their Grand Armada:
With him come Frobisher and Hawkins,
In yellow ruffs, rosettes, and stockings.

Room for my Lord! — proud Leicester’s Earl
Retires awhile from courtly cares,
Who took his wife, poor hapless girl!
And pitch’d her neck and heel down stairs;
Proving, in hopes to wed a richer,
If not her “friend,” at least her “pitcher.”

A flourish, trumpets! strike the drums!
Will Shakspeare, never of his pen sick,
Is here — next Doctor Masters comes,
Renown’d afar for curing men sick, —
Queen’s Serjeant Barham with his bums

And tipstaves, coif, and wig forensic;
(He lost, unless Sir Richard lies, his
Life at the famous "Black Assizes.")

Room! Room! for great Cecil! — place, place for his Dame! —
Room! Room! for Southampton — for Sidney, whose name
As a *Preux Chevalier*, in the records of Fame,
"Beats Banagher" — e'en now his praises, we all sing 'em,
Knight, Poet, Gentleman! — Room! for sage Walsingham! —

Room! for Lord Hunsdon! — for Sussex! — for Rawleigh! —
For INGOLDSBY!! Oh! it's enough to appal ye!
Dear me! how they call!
How they squall! how they bawl!
This dame has lost her shoe — that one her shawl —
My lord's got a tumble — my lady a fall! —
Now a Hall! a Hall!
A Brawl! a Brawl!
Here's my Lord Keeper Hatton, so stately and tall!
Has led out Lady Hunsdon to open the Ball!

Fiddlers! Fiddlers! fiddle away!
Resin your catgut! fiddle and play!
A roundelay!
Fiddle away!
Obey! obey! — hear what they all say!
Hip! — Music! — Nosey! !— play up there! — play!
Never was anything half so gay
As Sir Christopher Hatton's grand holiday!

The clock strikes twelve! — Who cares for the clock?
Who cares for — Hark! — What a loud Single-knock!
Dear me! dear me!
Who can it be? —
Why, who can be coming at this time of night,
With a knock *like that* honest folk to affright? —

"Affright?" — yes *affright!* — there are many who mock
At fear, and in danger stand firm as a rock,
Whom the roar of the battle-field never could shock,
Yet quail at the sound of a vile "Single-knock!"
Hark! — what can the Porter be thinking of? — What! —
If the booby has not let him in I'll be shot! —
Dear me! how hot
The room's all at once got! —
And what rings through the roof? —
It's the sound of a *hoof!* —
It's some donkey a-coming upstairs at full trot!
Stay! — the folding-doors open! the leaves are thrown back,

And in dances a tall *Figurant* — ALL IN BLACK!!

Gracious me what an *entrechat!* Oh, what a bound!
Then with what an *a-plomb* he comes down to the ground!
Look there! look there!
Now he's up in the air!
Now he's here! — now he's there — now he's no one knows where! —
See! see! — he's kick'd over a table and chair!
There they go! — all the strawberries, flowers, and sweet herbs,
Turn'd o'er and o'er,
Down on the floor,
Ev'ry caper he cuts oversets or disturbs
All the "Keen's Seedlings" and "Wilmot's Superbs!"
There's a *pirouette!* — we're
All a great deal too near!
A ring! — give him room or he'll "shin" you — stand clear!
There's a spring again! — oh! 'tis quite frightful! — oh dear!
His toe's broke the top of the glass chandelier!!
Now he's down again! — look at the *congees* and bows
And *salaams* which he makes to the Dame of the House,
Lady Alice, the noble Lord Treasurer's spouse!
Come, now we shall view
A grand *pas de deux*
Perform'd in the very first style by these two
— But no! — she recoils — she could scarce look more pale if
Instead of a Beau's 'twas the bow of a Bailiff! —
He holds out his hand — she declines it, and draws
Back her own — see! — he grasps it with horrid black claws,
Like the short, sharp, strong nails of a Polar Bear's paws!!

Then she "scream'd such a scream!"
Such another, I deem,
As, long after, Miss Mary Brown scream'd in her dream.
Well she might! for 'twas shrewdly remark'd by her Page,
A sharp little boy about twelve years of age,
Who was standing close by
When she utter'd her cry,
That the whole of her arm shrivell'd up, and grew dry,
While the fingers and thumb of the hand he had got
In his clutches became on the instant RED HOT!!

Now he whirls and he twirls
Through the girls in their curls,
And their rouge, and their feathers, and diamonds, and pearls;
Now high, — now low, —
Now fast, and now slow,
In terrible circumgyration they go,
The flame-coloured Belle and her coffee-faced Beau!
Up they go once! and up they go twice! —

Round the hall! — round the hall! — and now up they go thrice!
Now one grand pirouette, the performance to crown!
Now again they go UP!! — and they NEVER COME DOWN!!!

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The thunder roars! And the rain it pours!
And the lightning comes in through the windows and doors!
Then more calling, and bawling,
And squalling, and falling,
Oh! what a fearful “stramash” they are all in!
Out they all sally,
The whole *corps de ballet* —
Some dash down
Holborn-hill into the valley,
Where stagnates Fleet Ditch at the end of Harp Alley,
Some t’other way, with a speed quite amazing,
Nor pause to take breath till they get beyond Gray’s Inn.
In every sense of the word, such a *rout* of it,
Never was made in London, or out of it!

When they came the next day to examine the scene,
There was scarcely a vestige of all that had been;
The beautiful tapestry, blue, red, and green,

Was all blacken'd and scorch'd, and look'd dirty and mean,
All the crockery broken, dish, plate, and tureen!
While those who look'd up could perceive in the roof
One very large hole in the shape of a *hoof*!

Of poor Lady Hatton, it's needless to say
No traces have ever been found to this day,
Or the terrible dancer who whisk'd her away;
But out in the court-yard — and just in that part
Where the pump stands — lay bleeding a LARGE HUMAN HEART!
And sundry large stains
Of blood and of brains,
Which had not been wash'd off notwithstanding the rains,
Appear'd on the wood, and the handle and chains,
As if somebody's head with a very hard thump,
Had been recently knock'd on the top of the pump.
That pump is no more! — that of which you've just read, —
But they've put a new iron one up in its stead,
And still, it is said,
At that "small hour" so dread,
When all sober people are cosey in bed,
There may sometimes be seen on a moonshiny night,
Standing close by the new pump, a Lady in White,
Who keeps pumping away with, 'twould seem, all her might,
Though never a drop comes her pains to requite!
And hence many passengers now are debarr'd
From proceeding at nightfall through Bleeding Heart Yard!

MORAL

Fair ladies, attend!
And if you've a "friend
At Court," don't attempt to bamboozle or trick her!
— Don't meddle with negus, or any mix'd liquor! —
Don't dabble in "Magic!" my story has shown
How wrong 'tis to use any charms but your own!

Young Gentlemen, too, may, I think, take a hint
Of the same kind, from what I've here ventured to print,
All Conjuring's bad! they may get in a scrape
Before they're aware, and whatever its shape,
They may find it no easy affair to escape.
It's not every body that comes off so well
From *leger-de-main* tricks as Mr. Brunel.

Don't dance with a Stranger who looks like a Guy,
And *when* dancing don't cut your capers too high!
Depend on't the fault's in

Your method of waltzing,
If ever you kick out the candles — don't try!

At a ball or a play,
Or any *soirée*,
When a *petit souper* constitutes the "*Après*,"
If strawb'ries and cream with CHAMPAGNE form a part,
Take care of your HEAD! — and take care of your HEART!

If you want a new house
For yourself and your spouse,
Buy, or build one, — and honestly pay, every brick, for it!
Don't be so green as to go to Old Nick for it —
— Go to George Robins — he'll find you "a perch,"
(*Dulce domum's* his word,) without robbing the Church!

The last piece of advice which I'd have you regard
Is, "don't go of a night into Bleeding-Heart-Yard,"
It's a dark, little, dirty, black, ill-looking square,
With queer people about, and unless you take care,
You may find, when your pocket's clean'd out and left bare,
That the *iron* one is not the *only* "PUMP" there!

* * * * *

THE FORLORN ONE

Ah! why those piteous sounds of woe,
Lone wanderer of the dreary night?
Thy gushing tears in torrents flow,
Thy bosom pants in wild affright!

And thou, within whose iron breast
Those frowns austere too truly tell,
Mild pity, heaven-descended guest,
Hath never, never deign'd to dwell.

That rude, uncivil touch forego,
Stern despot of a fleeting hour!
Nor "make the angels weep" to know
The fond "fantastic tricks" of power!

Know'st thou not "mercy is not strain'd,
But droppeth as the gentle dew,"
And while it blesseth him who gain'd,
It blesseth him who gave it too?

Say, what art thou? and what is he,
Pale victim of despair and pain,
Whose streaming eyes and bended knee
Sue to thee thus — and sue in vain?

Cold, callous man! — he scorns to yield,
Or aught relax his felon gripe,
But answers, "I'm Inspector Field!
And this here Warmint's prigg'd your wipe!"

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JERRY JARVIS'S WIG: A LEGEND OF THE WEALD OF KENT

“The wig’s the thing! the wig! the wig.”
— *Old Song.*

“Joe,” said old Jarvis, looking out of his window — it was his ground-floor back — “Joe, you seem to be very hot, Joe —and you have got no wig!”

“Yes, sir,” quoth Joseph, pausing, and resting upon his spade, “it’s as hot a day as ever I see; but the celery must be got in, or there’ll be no autumn crop, and —”

“Well, but, Joe, the sun’s so hot, and it shines so on your bald head, it makes one wink to look at it. You’ll have a *coup de soleil*, Joe.”

“A *what*, sir?”

“No matter; it’s very hot working; and if you’ll step in doors, I’ll give you —”

“Thank ye, your honour, a drop of beer will be very acceptable.”

Joe’s countenance brightened amazingly.

“Joe, I’ll give you — my old wig!”

The countenance of Joseph fell, his grey eye had glistened as a blessed vision of double X flitted athwart his fancy; its glance faded again into the old, filmy, gooseberry-coloured hue, as he growled in a minor key, “A wig, sir!”

“Yes, Joe, a wig! The man who does not study the comfort of his dependents is an unfeeling scoundrel. You shall have my old, worn out wig.”

“I hope, sir, you’ll give me a drop o’ beer to drink your honour’s health in — it is very hot, and —”

“Come in, Joe, and Mrs. Witherspoon shall give it you.”

“Heaven bless your honour!” said honest Joe, striking his spade perpendicularly into the earth, and walking with more than usual alacrity towards the close-cut, quickset hedge which separated Mr. Jarvis’s garden from the high road.

From the quickset hedge aforesaid he now raised, with all due delicacy, a well-worn and somewhat dilapidated jacket, of a stuff by drapers most pseudonymously termed “everlasting.” Alack! alack! what is there to which *tempus edax rerum* will accord that epithet? — In its high and palmy days it

had been all of a piece; but as its master's eye now fell upon it, the expression of his countenance seemed to say with Octavian,

“Those days are gone, Floranthe!”

It was now, from frequent patching, a coat not unlike that of the patriarch, one of many colours.

Joseph Washford inserted his wrists into the corresponding orifices of the tattered garment, and with a steadiness of circumgyration, to be acquired only by long and sufficient practice, swung it horizontally over his ears, and settled himself into it.

“Confound your old jacket!” cried a voice from the other side the hedge, “keep it down, you rascal! don't you see my horse is frightened at it?”

“Sensible beast!” apostrophized Joseph, “I've been frighten'd at it myself every day for the last two years!”

The gardener cast a rueful glance at its sleeve, and pursued his way to the door of the back kitchen.

“Joe,” said Mrs. Witherspoon, a fat, comely dame, of about five-and-forty, “Joe, your master is but too good to you; he is always kind and considerate. Joe, he has desired me to give you his old wig.”

“And the beer, Ma'am Witherspoon?” said Washford, taking the proffered caxon, and looking at it with an expression somewhat short of rapture; — “and the beer, ma'am?”

“The beer, you guzzling wretch! — What beer? Master said nothing about no beer. You ungrateful fellow, has not he given you a wig?”

“Why, yes, Madam Witherspoon; but then, you see, his honour said it was very hot, and I'm very dry, and —”

“Go to the pump, sot!” said Mrs. Witherspoon, as she slammed the back-door in the face of the petitioner.

Mrs. Witherspoon was “of the Lady Huntingdon persuasion,” and Honorary Assistant Secretary to the Appledore branch of the “Ladies' Grand Junction Water-working Temperance Society.”

Joe remained for a few moments lost in mental abstraction; he looked at the door, he looked at the wig; his first thought was to throw it into the pig-sty — his corruption rose, but he resisted the impulse; he got the better of Satan; the half-formed imprecation died before it reached his lips. He looked disdainfully at the wig; it had once been a comely jasey enough, of the colour of over-baked ginger-bread, one of the description commonly known during the latter half of

the last century by the name of a "brown George." The species, it is to be feared, is now extinct, but a few, a very few of the same description might, till very lately, be occasionally seen — *rari nantes in gurgite vasto* — the glorious relics of a by-gone day, crowning the *cerebellum* of some venerated and venerable provost, or judge of assize; but Mr. Jarvis's wig had one peculiarity; unlike most of its fellows, it had a tail! — "cribbed and confined," indeed, by a shabby piece of faded shalloon.

Washford looked at it again; he shook his bald head; the wig had certainly seen its best days; still it had about it something of an air of faded gentility — it was "like ancient Rome, majestic in decay" — and as the small ale was not to be forthcoming, why — after all, an old wig was better than nothing!

Mr. Jeremiah Jarvis, of Appledore, in the Weald of Kent, was a gentleman by act of parliament; one of that class of gentlemen who, disdaining the *bourgeois*-sounding name of "attorney-at-law," are, by a legal fiction, denominated solicitors. I say by a legal fiction, for surely the general tenor of the intimation received by such as enjoy the advantage of their correspondence, has little in common with the idea usually attached to the term "solicitation." "If you don't pay my bill, and costs, I'll send you to jail," is a very energetic *entreaty*. There are, it is true, etymologists who derive their style and title from the Latin infinitive "*solicitare*," to "make anxious," — in all probability they are right.

If this be the true etymology of his title, as it was the main end of his calling, then was Jeremiah Jarvis a worthy exemplar of the *genus* to which he belonged. Few persons in his time had created greater solicitude among his Majesty's lieges within the "Weald." He was rich, of course. The best house in the country town is always the lawyer's, and it generally boasts a green door, stone steps, and a brass knocker. In neither of these appendages to opulence was Jeremiah deficient; but then, he was so *very* rich; his reputed wealth, indeed, passed all the common modes of accounting for its increase. True, he was so universal a favourite that every man whose will he made was sure to leave him a legacy; that he was a sort of general assignee to all the bankruptcies within twenty miles of Appledore; was clerk to half the "trusts;" and treasurer to most of the "rates," "funds," and "subscriptions," in that part of the country; that he was land-agent to Lord Mountrhino, and steward to the rich Miss Tabbytale of Smerrididdle Hall! That he had been guardian (?) to three young profligates, who all ran through their property, which, somehow or another, came at last into his hands, "at an equitable valuation." Still his possessions were so considerable, as not to be altogether accounted for, in vulgar esteem, even by these and other honourable modes of accumulation; nor were there wanting those who conscientiously entertained a belief that a certain dark-coloured gentleman, of indifferent character, known principally by his predilection for appearing in perpetual mourning, had been through life his great friend and counsellor, and had mainly assisted in the acquirement of his revenues. That "old Jerry Jarvis had sold himself to the devil" was, indeed, a dogma which it were heresy to doubt in Appledore; — on this head, at least, there were few schismatics in the parish.

When the worthy “Solicitor” next looked out of his ground-floor back, he smiled with much complacency at beholding Joe Washford again hard at work — in his wig — the little tail aforesaid oscillating like a pendulum in the breeze. If it be asked what could induce a gentleman, whose leading principle seems to have been self-appropriation, to make so magnificent a present, the answer is, that Mr. Jarvis might, perhaps, have thought an occasional act of benevolence necessary or politic; he is not the only person, who, having stolen a quantity of leather, has given away a pair of shoes, *pour l’amour de Dieu* — perhaps he had other motives.

Joe, meanwhile, worked away at the celery bed; but truth obliges us to say, neither with the same degree of vigour or perseverance as had marked the earlier efforts of the morning. His pauses were more frequent; he rested longer on the handle of his spade; while ever and anon his eye would wander from the trench beneath him to an object not unworthy the contemplation of a natural philosopher. This was an apple-tree.

Fairer fruit never tempted Eve, or any of her daughters; the bending branches groaned beneath their luxuriant freight, and, drooping to earth, seemed to ask the protecting aid of man either to support or to relieve them. The fine, rich glow of their sun streaked clusters derived additional loveliness from the level beams of the descending day star. An anchorite’s mouth had watered at the pippins.

On the precise graft of the espalier of Eden, “Sanchoniathon, Manetho, and Berosus” are undecided; the best-informed Talmudists, however, have, if we are to believe Dr. Pinner’s German Version, pronounced it a Ribstone pippin, and a Ribstone pippin tree it was that now attracted the optics, and discomposed the inner man of the thirsty, patient, but perspiring gardener. The heat was still oppressive; no beer had moistened his lip, though its very name, uttered as it was in the ungracious tones of a Witherspoon, had left behind a longing as intense as fruitless. His thirst seemed supernatural, when at this moment his left ear experienced “a slight and tickling sensation,” such as we are assured is occasionally produced by an infinitesimal dose in homœopathy; a still, small *voice* — it was as though a daddy-long-legs were whispering in his *tympanum* — a small *voice* seemed to say, “Joe! — take an apple, Joe!!”

Honest Joseph started at the suggestion; the rich crimson of his jolly nose deepened to a purple tint in the beams of the setting sun; his very forehead was incarnadine. He raised his hand to scratch his ear — the little tortuous tail had worked its way into it — he pulled it out by the bit of shalloon, and allayed the itching, then cast his eye wistfully towards the mansion where his master was sitting by the open window. Joe pursed up his parched lips into an arid whistle, and with a desperate energy struck his spade once more into the celery bed.

Alack! alack! what a piece of work is man! — How short his triumphs! — How frail his resolutions!

From this fine and very original moral reflection we turn reluctantly to record the sequel. The celery bed, alluded to as the main scene of Mr. Washford’s

operations, was drawn in a rectilinear direction, nearly across the whole breadth of the parallelogram that comprised the “kitchen garden.” Its northern extremity abutted to the hedge before mentioned, its southern one — woe is me that it should have been so — was in fearful vicinity to the Ribstone pippin-tree. One branch, low bowed to earth, seemed ready to discharge its precious burden into the very trench. As Joseph stooped to insert the last plant with his dibble, an apple of more than ordinary beauty bobbed against his knuckles. — “He’s taking snuff, Joe,” whispered the same small *voice*; — the tail had twisted itself into its old position. “He is sneezing! — Now, Joe! — Now!” And, ere the agitated horticulturist could recover from his surprise and alarm, the fruit was severed, and — in his hand!

“He! he! he!” shrilly laughed, or seemed to laugh, that accursed little pigtail. — Washford started at once to the perpendicular — with an enfrenzied grasp he tore the jasey from his head, and, with that in one hand, and his ill acquired spoil in the other, he rushed distractedly from the garden!

* * * * *

All that night was the humble couch of the once happy gardener haunted with the most fearful visions. He was stealing apples — he was robbing hen roosts — he was altering the chalks upon the milk-score — he had purloined three *chemises* from a hedge, and he awoke in the very act of cutting the throat of one of Squire Hodge’s sheep! A clammy dew stood upon his temples — the cold perspiration burst from every pore — he sprang in terror from the bed.

“Why, Joe, what ails thee, man?” cried the usually incurious Mrs. Washford; “what be the matter with thee? Thee hast done nothing but grunt and growl all t’ night long, and now thee dost stare as if thee saw summut. What bees it, Joe?”

A long-drawn sigh was her husband’s only answer; his eye fell upon the bed. “How the devil came *that* here?” quoth Joseph, with a sudden recoil: “who put that thing on my pillow?”

“Why, I did, Joseph. Th’ ould night cap is in the wash, and thee didst toss and tumble so, and kick the clothes off, I thought thee mightiest catch cowl’d, so I clapt t’ wig atop o’ thee head.”

And there it lay — the little sinister-looking tail impudently perked up, like an infernal gnomon on a Satanic dial plate — Larceny and Ovicide shone in every hair of it!

“The dawn was overcast, the morning lower’d,
And heavily in clouds brought on the day,”

when Joseph Washford once more repaired to the scene of his daily labours; a sort of unpleasant consciousness flushed his countenance, and gave him an uneasy feeling as he opened the garden gate; for Joe, generally speaking, was

honest as the skin between his eyebrows — his hand faltered as it pressed the latch. “Pooh, pooh! ‘twas but an apple, after all!” said Joseph. He pushed open the wicket, and found himself beneath the tempting tree.

But vain now were all its fascinations; like fairy gold seen by the morning light, its charms had faded into very nothingness. Worlds, to say nothing of apples, which in shape resemble them, would not have bought him to stretch forth an unhallowed hand again. He went steadily to his work.

The day continued cloudy, huge drops of rain fell at intervals, stamping his bald pate with spots as big as halfpence; but Joseph worked on. As the day advanced, showers fell thick and frequent; the fresh-turned earth was itself fragrant as a *bouquet*. — Joseph worked on — and when at last *Jupiter Pluvius* descended in all his majesty, soaking the ground into the consistency of a dingy pudding, he put on his party-coloured jacket, and strode towards his humble home, rejoicing in his renewed integrity. “‘Twas but an apple, after all! Had it been an apple-pie, indeed!” —

“An apple-pie!” — the thought was a dangerous one — too dangerous to dwell on. But Joseph’s better Genius was at this time lord of the ascendant — he dismissed it, and passed on.

On arriving at his cottage, an air of bustle and confusion prevailed within, much at variance with the peaceful serenity usually observable in its economy. Mrs. Washford was in high dudgeon; her heels clattered on the red-tiled floor, and she whisked about the house like a parched pea upon a drum head; her voice, generally small and low — “an excellent thing in woman” — was pitched at least an octave above its ordinary level; she was talking fast and furious. Something had evidently gone wrong. The mystery was soon explained. The “*cussed ould twoad* of a cat” had got into the dairy, and licked off the cream from the only pan their single cow had filled that morning! And there she now lay — purring as in scorn — Tib, heretofore the meekest of mousers, the honestest, the least “*scaddle*” of the feline race — a cat that one would have sworn might have been trusted with untold fish — yes — there was no denying it — proofs were too strong against her — yet there she lay, hardened in her iniquity, coolly licking her whiskers, and reposing quietly upon — what? — Jerry Jarvis’s old wig!!

The patience of a Stoic must have yielded — it had been too much for the temperament of the Man of Uz — Joseph Washford lifted his hand — that hand which had never yet been raised on Tibby, save to fondle and caress — it now descended on her devoted head in one tremendous “dowse.” Never was cat so astonished — so enraged — all the tiger portion of her nature rose in her soul. Instead of galloping off, hissing and sputtering, with arched back and tail erected, as any ordinary Grimalkin would unquestionably have done under similar circumstances, she paused a moment — drew back on her haunches — all her energies seemed concentrated for one prodigious spring; a demoniac fire gleamed in her green and yellow eyeballs, as, bounding upwards, she fixed her talons firmly in each of her assailant’s cheeks! — Many and many a day after

were sadly visible the marks of those envenomed claws — then, dashing over his shoulder with an unearthly mew, she leaped through the open casement, and — was seen no more.

“The Devil’s in the cat!” was the apostrophe of Mrs. Margaret Washford. Her husband said nothing, but thrust the old wig into his pocket, and went to bathe his scratches at the pump.

Day after day, night after night, ’twas all the same — Joe Washford’s life became a burden to him; his natural upright and honest mind struggled hard against the frailty of human nature. He was ever restless and uneasy; his frank, open, manly look, that blenched not from the gaze of the spectator, was no more; a sly and sinister expression had usurped the place of it.

Mr. Jeremiah Jarvis had little of what the world calls “Taste,” still less of Science — Ackerman would have called him a “Snob,” and Buckland a “Nincompoop.” Of the Horticultural Society, its *fêtes*, its fruits, and its fiddlings, he knew nothing. Little reeked he of flowers — save cauliflowers — in these, indeed, he was a *connoisseur* — to their cultivation and cookery the respective talents of Joe and Madame Witherspoon had long been dedicated; but as for a *bouquet*! — Hardham’s 37 was “the only one fit for a gentleman’s nose.” And yet, after all, Jerry Jarvis had a good-looking tulip bed. A female friend of his had married a Dutch merchant; Jerry drew the settlements; the lady paid him by a cheque on “Child’s,” the gentleman by a present of a “box of roots.” Jerry put the latter in his garden — he had rather they had been schalots.

Not so his neighbour, Jenkinson; he *was* a man of “Taste” and of “Science;” he was an F.R.C.E.B.S., which, as he told the vicar, implied “Fellow of the Royal Cathartico-Emetico-Botanical Society,” and his autograph in Sir John Frostyface’s album stood next to that of the Emperor of all the Russias. Neighbour Jenkinson fell in love with the pips and petals of “neighbour Jarvis’s” tulips. There were one or two among them of such brilliant, such surpassing beauty — the “cups” so well formed — the colours so defined. To be sure, Mr. Jenkinson had enough in his own garden; but then “Enough,” says the philosopher, “always means a little more than a man has got.” — Alas! Alas! Jerry Jarvis was never known to *bestow* — his neighbour dared not offer to *purchase* from so wealthy a man; and, worse than all, Joe the gardener was incorruptible — ay, but the Wig?

Joseph Washford was working away again in the blaze of the mid-day sun; his head looked like a copper saucepan fresh from the brazier’s.

“Why, where’s your wig, Joseph?” said the voice of his master from the well-known window; “what have you done with your wig?” The question was embarrassing — its tail had tickled his ear till it had made it sore; Joseph had put the wig in his pocket.

Mr. Jeremiah Jarvis was indignant; he liked not that his benefits should be ill appreciated by the recipient. — “Hark ye, Joseph Washford,” said he, “either wear my wig, or let me have it again!”

There was no mistaking the meaning of his tones; they were resonant of indignation and disgust, of mingled grief and anger, the amalgamation of sentiment naturally produced by

“Friendship unreturn’d
And unrequited Love.”

Washford’s heart smote him: he felt all that was implied in his master’s appeal. “It’s here, your Honour,” said he; “I had only taken it off because we have had a smartish shower; but the sky is brightening now.” The wig was replaced, and the little tortuous pigtail wriggled itself into its accustomed position.

At this moment neighbour Jenkinson peeped over the hedge.

“Joe Washford!” said neighbour Jenkinson.

“Sir, to you,” was the reply.

“How beautiful your tulips look after the rain!”

“Ah! sir, master sets no great store by them flowers,” returned the gardener.

“Indeed! — Then perhaps he would have no objection to part with a few?”

“Why, no! — I don’t think master would like to *give* them — or anything else — away, sir;” — and Washford scratched his ear.

“Joe!!”—said Mr. Jenkinson—”Joe!!”

The Sublime, observes Longinus, is often embodied in a monosyllable — “Joe!!!” — Mr. Jenkinson said no more; but a half-crown shone from between his upraised fingers, and its “poor, poor dumb mouth” spoke for him.

How Joseph Washford’s left ear *did* itch! — He looked to the ground-floor back — Mr. Jarvis had left the window.

Mr. Jenkinson’s ground-plot boasted, at daybreak next morning, a splendid *Semper Augustus*, “which was not so before,” and Joseph Washford was led home, much about the same time, in a most extraordinary state of “civilation,” from “The Three Jolly Pot-boys.”

From that hour he was the Fiend’s!!

* * * * *

“*Facilis descensus Averni!*” says Virgil. — “It is only the first step that is attended with any difficulty,” says — somebody else — when speaking of the decollated martyr, St. Dennis’s walk with his head under his arm. “The First Step!” — Joseph Washford had taken that step! — He had taken two — three — four steps; — and now, from a hesitating, creeping, cat-like mode of progression, he had got into a firmer tread — an amble — a positive trot! — He took the family linen “to the wash:” — one of Madame Witherspoon’s best Holland *chemises* was never seen after.

“Lost? — Impossible! How *could* it be lost? — Where *could* it be gone to? — Who *could* have got it? It was her best — her *very* best! — she should know it among a hundred — among a thousand! — it was marked with a great W in the corner! — Lost? — Impossible? — She would *see!*” — Alas! she never *did* see — the *chemise* — *abiit, erupit, evasit!* — It was

“Like the lost Pleiad, seen on earth no more!”

— but Joseph Washford’s Sunday shirt *was* seen, finer and fairer than ever, the pride and *dulce decus* of the Meeting.

The Meeting? — Ay, the Meeting. Joe Washford never missed the Appledore Independent Meeting House, whether the service were in the morning or afternoon — whether the Rev. Mr. Slyandry exhorted or made way for the Rev. Mr. Tearbrain. Let who would officiate, there was Joe. As I have said before, he never missed; — but other people missed — one missed an umbrella — one a pair of clogs. Farmer Johnson missed his tobacco box — Farmer Jackson his greatcoat; — Miss Jackson missed her hymn-book — a diamond edition, bound in maroon coloured velvet, with gilt corners and clasps. Everything, in short, was missed — but Joe Washford; there *he* sat, grave, sedate, and motionless — all save that restless, troublesome, fidgety little Pigtail attached to his wig, which nothing *could* keep quiet, or prevent from tickling and interfering with Miss Thompson’s curls, as she sat, back to back with Joe, in the adjoining pew. After the third Sunday, Nancy Thompson eloped with the tall recruiting sergeant of the Connaught Rangers.

The summer passed away — autumn came and went — and Christmas, jolly Christmas, that period of which we are accustomed to utter the mournful truism, it “comes but *once* a-year,” was at hand. It was a fine bracing morning; the sun was just beginning to throw a brighter tint upon the Quaker-coloured ravine of Orlestone Hill, when a medical gentleman, returning to the quiet little village of Ham Street, that lies at its foot, from a farmhouse at Kingsnorth, rode briskly down the declivity.

After several hours of patient attention, Mr. Moneypenny had succeeded in introducing to the notice of seven little expectant brothers and sisters a “remarkably fine child,” and was now hurrying home in the sweet hope of a comfortable “snooze” for a couple of hours before the announcement of tea and muffins should arouse him to fresh exertion.

The road at this particular spot had, even then, been cut deep below the surface of the soil, for the purpose of diminishing the abruptness of the descent, and, as either side of the superincumbent banks was clothed with a thick mantle of tangled copsewood, the passage, even by day, was sufficiently obscure, the level beams of the rising or setting sun, as they happened to enfilade the gorge, alone illuminating its recesses. A long stream of rosy light was just beginning to make its way through the vista, and Mr. Moneypenny's nose had scarcely caught and reflected its kindred ray, when the sturdiest and most active cob that ever rejoiced in the appellation of a "Suffolk punch," brought herself up in mid career upon her haunches, and that with a suddenness which had almost induced her rider to describe that beautiful mathematical figure, the *parabola*, between her ears. Peggy — her name was Peggy — stood stock-still, snorting like a stranded grampus, and alike insensible to the gentle hints afforded her by hand and heel.

"Tch! — Ttch! — Get along, Peggy!" half exclaimed, half whistled the equestrian.

If ever steed said in its heart, "I'll be shot if I do!" it was Peggy at that moment. She planted her forelegs deep in the sandy soil, raised her stump of a tail to an elevation approaching the horizontal, protruded her nose like a pointer at a covey, and with expanded nostril continued to snuffle most egregiously.

Mr. Geoffrey Gambado, the illustrious "Master of the Horse to the Doge of Venice," tells us, in his far famed treatise on the Art Equestrian, that the most embarrassing position in which a rider can be placed is, when *he* wishes to go one way, and his horse is determined to go another. There is, to be sure, a *tertium quid*, which, though it "splits the difference," scarcely obviates the inconvenience; this is when the parties compromise the matter by not going any way at all — to this compromise Peggy, and her (*soi-disant*) master were now reduced; they had fairly joined issue. "Budge!" quoth the doctor.

—"Budge not!" quoth the fiend — for nothing short of a fiend could, of a surety, inspire Peggy at such a time with such unwonted obstinacy. — Moneypenny whipped and spurred — Peggy plunged, and reared, and kicked, and for several minutes to a superficial observer the termination of the contest might have appeared uncertain; but your profound thinker sees at a glance that, however the scales may appear to vibrate, when the question between the sexes is one of perseverance, it is quite a lost case for the masculine gender. Peggy beat the doctor "all to sticks," and when he was fairly tired of goading and thumping, maintained her position as firmly as ever.

It is of no great use, and not particularly agreeable, to sit still, on a cold frosty morning in January, upon the outside of a brute that will neither go forwards nor backwards — so Mr. Moneypenny got off, and muttering curses *both* "loud" *and* "deep" between his chattering teeth, "progressed," as near as the utmost extremity of the extended bridle would allow him, to peep among the weeds and brushwood that flanked the road, in order to discover, if possible, what it was that so exclusively attracted the instinctive attention of his Bucephalus.

His curiosity was not long at fault; the sunbeam glanced partially upon some object ruddier even than itself — it was a scarlet waistcoat, the wearer of which, overcome perchance by Christmas computation, seemed to have selected for his “thrice driven bed of down,” the thickest clump of the tallest and most-imposing nettles, thereon to doze away the narcotic effects of superabundant juniper.

This, at least, was Mr. Moneypenny’s belief, or he would scarcely have uttered, at the highest pitch of his *contralto*, “What are you doing there, you drunken rascal? frightening my horse!” — We have already hinted, if not absolutely asserted, that Peggy was a mare; but this was no time for verbal criticism. — “Get up, I say — get up, and go home, you scoundrel!” — But the “scoundrel” and “drunken rascal” answered not; he moved not, nor could the prolonged shouting of the appellant, aided by significant explosions from a double thonged whip, succeed in eliciting a reply. No motion indicated that the recumbent figure, whose outline alone was visible, was a living and a breathing man!

The clear, shrill tones of a ploughboy’s whistle sounded at this moment from the bottom of the hill, where the broad and green expanse of Romney Marsh stretches away from its foot for many a mile, and now gleamed through the mists of morning, dotted and enamelled with its thousand flocks. In a few minutes his tiny figure was seen “slouching” up the ascent, casting a most disproportionate and ogre-like shadow before him.

“Come here, Jack,” quoth the doctor — “come here, boy, lay hold of this bridle, and mind that my horse does not run away.”

Peggy threw up her head, and snorted disdain of the insinuation — she had not the slightest intention of doing any such thing.

Mr. Moneypenny meanwhile, disencumbered of his restive nag, proceeded by manual application to arouse the sleeper. Alas! the Seven of Ephesus might sooner have been awakened from their century of somnolency. His was that “dreamless sleep that knows no walking;” his cares in this world were over. Vainly did Moneypenny practise his own constant precept, “To be well shaken!” — There lay before him the lifeless body of a MURDERED MAN!

The corpse lay stretched upon its back, partially concealed, as we have before said, by the nettles which had sprung up among the stumps of the half grubbed underwood; the throat was fearfully lacerated, and the dark, deep, arterial dye of the coagulated blood shewed that the carotid had been severed. There was little to denote the existence of any struggle; but as the day brightened, the sandy soil of the road exhibited an impression as of a body that had fallen on its plastic surface, and had been dragged to its present position, while fresh horseshoe prints seemed to intimate that either the assassin or his victim had been mounted. The pockets of the deceased were turned out, and empty; a hat and heavy loaded whip lay at no great distance from the body.

“But what have we here?” quoth Doctor Moneypenny; “what is it that the poor fellow holds so tightly in his hand?”

That hand had manifestly clutched some article with all the spasmodic energy of a dying grasp — IT WAS AN OLD WIG!!

* * * * *



Those who are fortunate enough to have seen a Cinque Port courthouse may possibly divine what that useful and most necessary edifice was some eighty years ago. Many of them seem to have undergone little alteration, and are in general of a composite order of architecture, a fanciful arrangement of brick and timber, with what Johnson would have styled “interstices, reticulated, and decussated between intersections” of lath and plaster. Its less euphonious designation in the “Weald” is a “noggin.” One half the basement story is usually of the more solid material, the other, open to the street — from which it is separated only by a row of dingy columns, supporting a portion of the superstructure — is paved with tiles, and sometimes does duty as a marketplace, while, in its centre, flanking the broad staircase that leads to the sessions house above, stands an ominous-looking machine, of heavy perforated wood, clasped within whose stern embrace “the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep” off occasionally the drowsiness produced by convivial excess, in a most undignified position, an inconvenience much increased at times by some mischievous urchin, who, after abstracting the shoes of the helpless *detenu*, amuses himself by tickling the soles of his feet.

It was in such a place, or rather in the Courtroom above, that in the year 1761 a hale, robust man, somewhat past the middle age, with a very bald pate, save where a continued tuft of coarse, wiry hair, stretching from above each ear, swelled out into a greyish looking bush upon the occiput, held up his hand before a grave and enlightened assemblage of Dymchurch jurymen. He stood arraigned for that offence most heinous in the sight of God and man, the deliberate and cold-blooded butchery of an unoffending, unprepared fellow-creature — *homicidium quod nullo vidente, nullo auscultante, clam perpetratur.*

The victim was one Humphry Bourne, a reputable grazier of Ivychurch, worthy and well to do, though, perchance, a thought too apt to indulge on a market day, when “a score of ewes” had brought in a reasonable profit. Some such cause had detained him longer than usual at an Ashford cattle show; he had left the town late and alone; early in the following morning his horse was found standing at his own stable door, the saddle turned round beneath its belly, and much about the time that the corpse of its unfortunate master was discovered some four miles off, by our friend the pharmacopolist.

That poor Bourne had been robbed and murdered there could be no question.

Who, then, was the perpetrator of the atrocious deed? — The unwilling hand almost refuses to trace the name of — Joseph Washford.

Yet so it was. Mr. Jeremiah Jarvis was himself the coroner for that division of the county of Kent known by the name of “The Lath of Scraye.” He had not sat two minutes on the body before he recognised his *quondam* property, and started at beholding in the grasp of the victim, as torn in the death struggle from the murderer’s head, his own OLD WIG — his own perky little pigtail, tied up with a piece of shabby shalloon, now wriggling and quivering, as in salutation of its ancient master. The silver buckles of the murdered man were found in Joe Washford’s shoes — broad pieces were found in Joe Washford’s pockets — Joe Washford had himself been found, when the hue and cry was up, hid in a corn rig at no great distance from the scene of slaughter, his pruning-knife red with the evidence of his crime — “the grey hairs yet stuck to the heft!”

For their humane administration of the laws, the lieges of this portion of the realm have long been celebrated. Here it was that merciful verdict was recorded in the case of the old lady accused of larceny, “We find her Not Guilty, and hope she will never do so any more!” Here it was that the more experienced culprit, when called upon to plead with the customary, though somewhat superfluous, inquiry, as to “how he would be tried?” substituted for the usual reply, “By God and my country,” that of “By your worship and a Dymchurch Jury.” Here it was — but enough! — not even a Dymchurch jury could resist such evidence, even though the gallows (*i.e.* the expense of erecting one) stared them, as well as the criminal, in the face. The very pig-tail alone! — Ever at his ear! — A clearer case of *suadente Diabolo* never was made out. Had there been a doubt, its very

conduct in the Court-house would have settled the question. The Rev. Joel Ingoldsby, umquhile chaplain to the Romney Bench, has left upon record that, when exhibited in evidence, together with the blood-stained knife, its twistings, its caperings, its gleeful evolutions quite “flabbergasted” the jury, and threw all beholders into a consternation. It was remarked, too, by many in the Court, that the Forensic Wig of the Recorder himself was, on that trying occasion, palpably agitated, and that its three depending, learned-looking tails lost curl at once, and slunk beneath the obscurity of the powdered collar, just as the boldest dog recoils from a rabid animal of its own species, however small and insignificant.

Why prolong the painful scene? — Joe Washford was tried — Joe Washford was convicted — Joe Washford was hanged!!

The fearful black gibbet, on which his body clanked in its chains to the midnight winds, frowns no more upon Orlestone Hill; it has sunk beneath the encroaching hand of civilization; but there it might be seen late in the last century, an awful warning to all bald-pated gentlemen how they wear, or accept, the old wig of a Special Attorney,

Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes!

Such gifts, as we have seen, may lead to a “Morbid Delusion, the climax of which is Murder!”

The fate of the Wig itself is somewhat doubtful: nobody seems to have recollected, with any degree of precision, what became of it. Mr. Ingoldsby “had heard” that, when thrown into the fire by the Courtkeeper, after whizzing, and fizzling, and performing all sorts of supernatural antics and contortions, it at length whirled up the chimney with a bang that was taken for the explosion of one of the Feversham powder-mills, twenty miles off; while others insinuate that in the “Great Storm” which took place on the night when Mr. Jeremiah Jarvis went to his “long home,” — wherever that may happen to be — and the whole of “The Marsh” appeared as one broad sheet of flame, something that looked very like a Fiery Wig — perhaps a miniature Comet — it had unquestionably a tail — was seen careering in the blaze — and seeming to “ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm.”