

Stonyhurst is a great English school with noble traditions. One may describe it in a phrase as the Eton of Catholic England. Roger was not a very industrious boy, but in the three years of his residence there he learned some Latin and Greek and Euclid, and attended chemistry lectures and of course took part in the religious practices which are the foundation of the school life.

How far can the memory of one's school-days wholly pass away from one's mind? That is a psychological problem every man can solve for himself. Roger Tichborne should have had happy recollections of summer evenings spent fishing on the banks of the Hodder and the Ribble, of triumphs won in school theatricals, and of that wigwam which he built across the meadows, to which he used to retire to smoke until a watchful master caught him at it and he was dealt with according to the statute in that case made and provided.

When he left Stonyhurst he entered the larger world as a young man of good social position. He visited Knoyle House, the seat of his father and mother, Tichborne House, where his Aunt Doughty and his uncle, Sir Edward, were always ready to receive him, and here he made his home. He visited the country people of Hampshire, took part in county sports, and was elected to the Army and Navy Club and the Alfred Club in London.

For now, in 1849, he had determined to join the Army. He went to Sandhurst and passed an examination which does not seem to have been a very strenuous ordeal. In those days the heir to a baronetcy who was also a young man of means had his paths towards military glory made reasonably easy for him. He got his commission in July, and

studied for a second examination at his grandfather's house in Upper Grosvenor Street. At this time he seems to have seen a good deal of Vincent Gosford, an old and trusted agent of the Tichborne family, to whom he looked up with confidence and respect.

Tichborne House had become a home to him. From his aunt, Lady Doughty, he received more affectionate sympathy than he had ever had from his own mother, and there was Cousin Kate, a beautiful girl of fifteen—for him the prettiest Kate in Christendom—with whom the young fellow naturally and properly fell over head and ears in love. There is a pretty picture in the dull pages of the report of the trial where the stalwart young officer, who was ordered to join his regiment, the Carabineers, or 6th Dragoon Guards, runs down to Tichborne to say farewell to his aunt, not forgetting Cousin Kate, and appears in his new uniform, at the dinner table, for the first time of wearing, to the pride and delight of the dear ladies. These are pleasant memories of youth, not lightly lost, one would think, even in the wilds of Australia.

The life of an English officer stationed in Ireland in the 'forties was a pleasant social affair for a young man of means and position. True, his brother officers ragged him a little about his Frenchified ways. It was the age of the "darned Mounseer," and the two nations had not tasted of that elixir of peace and good-will—the *entente cordiale*. But on the whole Roger Tichborne was a general favourite. He did his clubs, hunted with harriers and foxhounds, attended the Lord Lieutenant's drawing-rooms, stayed with the Clanricardes, Lord Howth, Lady Bellew, whose son he had known at Stonyhurst, and all the best people in Ireland.

When he came of age in 1850 we find the young man taking a keen interest in the complicated affairs of the resettlement of the estates, to which his consent was required and was not given without due consideration. Mr. Roger considered £500 a more suitable allowance for himself than £400, and this was conceded after due discussion. In the event of his uncle's death he stipulated that this was to be raised to £1000, and this point he carried. Then he made his own will with great care and much sense, appointing his friend, Vincent Gosford, his executor.

About this time he thought of transferring to the 10th Hussars or the 9th Lancers, who were going to India, and he told Gosford of his "great fancy" for his cousin, and desired she should have Upton to live in if he was abroad and she desired it. Both he and Kate Doughty became more attached to each other, and at length even Sir Edward Doughty began to observe what was going on. Aunt Doughty had been more or less a sympathetic looker-on all the while.

Sir Edward, after the manner of heavy fathers in drama and real life, urged sensible objections to matrimonial engagements and demurred to the lovers' pleadings. Youth was the first objection. The hero was only twenty-two, the heroine but seventeen. A more serious obstacle was that they were first cousins, to whose union Holy Church was adverse. The old man was lying ill in bed, and Roger saw him on January 11th, 1852, when he issued his edict and insisted that the young man's visits should terminate.

Roger Tichborne was a true lover, but a man of sense. He gave his word to the father that he should be obeyed. Fathers in those Victorian days were

figures of considerable influence in domestic circles. The young lovers met in the drawing-room and exchanged locks of hair. These they placed in lockets on which was inscribed the memorable date, January 11th, 1852. The next day poor Roger left Tichborne in despair.

There is a pathetic letter from him pouring forth his grief to his dearly beloved: "What was the nature of my thoughts, my dearest K., you may easily imagine, to think that I was obliged to leave the next day, not to see you again, not to see you again not perhaps for years, if ever I come back from India—the idea was bursting my heart." Ah me! The old, old story.

Later on the father was thought to be dying, and Roger was sent for. There was a further interview. Again, after the fashion of heavy fathers, the old man relented. He revised his edict. The young folk must wait three years and then, subject to Mr. James's consent and the blessing of the Church, he would stand in the way no longer.

In June Sir Edward was again ill, and Roger escorted Lady Doughty and Kate down to Hampshire. He had to return to his regiment, and before he left he had a walk with her upon the banks of the river. Here he gave her a paper, a copy of which, in a sealed packet, he had given to his dear friend and executor, Vincent Gosford. On it was written: "Tichborne Park. I make on this day the promise that if I marry my cousin, K. Doughty, this year, or before three years are over, at the latest, to build a church or chapel at Tichborne to the Holy Virgin in thanksgiving for the protection which she will have shewed us in praying God that our wishes might be fulfilled. R. C. Tichborne, June 22nd, 1852."

This was the parting gift of her lover, and from that day Kate never saw him more.

Difficulties hindered the young officer from transferring into a regiment going to India, and Roger made up his mind to resign his commission and travel in South America. He said farewell to Gosford and went across to Paris to see his mother and father and his old tutor, Chatillon, and other friends in France, and on March 1st, 1853, he sailed with his servant, Moore, from Havre, in *La Pauline*, for Valparaiso. He arrived at Valparaiso on June 19th, 1853, and the details of his various travels are set out in the letters that he writes from time to time to his family. Soon after his arrival he learns of his uncle's death, which gives him an income of £1,000 a year and brings him a step nearer to his inheritance. He had taken with him a credit note for £200, and now he writes to arrange with Glyn, his banker, for this to be raised to £3,000.

Among other letters that he wrote home is one to Gosford, in which he says: "I and my mother could never agree with each other together," and he confidentially suggests to his friend that when he returns to England his mother's allowance should be conditional on her living away from Tichborne, as "it would be quite impossible for me to put up with her character."

After many excursions from Valparaiso he sets out in the beginning of 1854 to cross the Corderillas to Buenos Ayres; from there he goes to Rio de Janeiro to look for a vessel to carry him to the West Indies. The last letter that he wrote home to his family is dated March 12th, 1854. It is written to Lady Doughty and contains a long account of his journey from Valparaiso to Buenos Ayres, and at the end of it he tells his aunt that he expects at least

sixteen pages from her when he reaches Kingston, Jamaica. His last letters were business communications to Gosford, and the final date of any known letter from Roger Tichborne is dated April 1st, 1854.

It is known that on April 20th he went on board the *Bella* at Rio. She was a vessel of 300 to 400 tons, commanded by Captain Birkett, and bound from Valparaiso to New York. The ill-fated vessel set sail as soon as Roger Tichborne joined her.

At that time he was a young man of five-and-twenty, heir to a baronetcy and great estates, in love with a charming girl he hoped to marry on his return to England. He had a large income, was in constant correspondence with his bankers and with his friend and executor, Vincent Gosford, about his affairs and the business arrangements he desired to make.

He was going to the West Indies and looking forward to receiving on his arrival a budget of family news. It is hard to imagine why such a man should voluntarily disappear and doom himself to a life of poverty and drudgery among low-class associates. Yet this was afterwards asserted and believed by many worthy citizens whose love of the marvellous overpowered their appreciation of facts.

Roger Tichborne was never heard of again from the day he sailed from Rio. The *Bella* never reached her destination. Some wreckage and a boat were found, but no survivor of the ill-fated crew was ever heard of. The insurers paid on a total loss. The arrears of wages were claimed by and paid to the sailors' relatives. The Tichborne family waited and made every inquiry after the missing ship, but at length, when no tidings were obtainable, the

courts presumed the death of Roger Tichborne and his will was proved and he was mourned as dead.

But his mother, poor soul, refused to admit that her first-born was taken. She clung to the hope that her son was still living. It became an obsession with her, and she lived on in the half-crazy belief that the sea would give up its dead and her son would return.

2. THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL

Twelve years are supposed to elapse between the first and second acts. Roger Tichborne, last heard of in 1854 on the ill-fated *Bella*, has been written off the book of life by all his friends and relations save one—his mother. She has never ceased to hope that her long-lost son will return to her, and obstinately refuses to believe that he is drowned.

When the husband, Sir James Tichborne, died in 1862, poor Lady Tichborne was left with a very limited private income. The settlements of the estate made no provision for her. Her son, Alfred, who succeeded to the estates, left her to live in Paris alone. He died in February, 1866, and was succeeded by an infant child. The lonely old lady was free to exercise her quest for the lost one as seemed best to her.

It is twelve years since Roger Tichborne disappeared, and now his doting mother begins to issue advertisements in many languages offering rewards for news of him. These describe his light brown hair and blue eyes, his property and estates are mentioned, and it is stated that he embarked in the *Bella* twelve years ago and has not been heard of since. The old lady has made up her mind that her son is living under a feigned name in Australia, and she gets into touch with a Mr. Cubitt, who,

in 1865, was running an emigrants' inquiry office in Sydney. He finds the problem much in his way of business and takes active steps to find the missing heir.

There was another Australian worthy who was also attracted by these strange advertisements, Mr. Gibbes, the attorney of Wagga Wagga, a small New South Wales town of some two thousand inhabitants. Mr. Gibbes, it appears, had been professionally employed in piloting a big fellow named Tom Castro, a rough-rider and slaughterman, through the Insolvent Court. Tom Castro is very much under the weather at this time, and Mr. Gibbes, attorney, is deeply interested in the documents that are appearing.

And then a strange thing happens. Mr. Gibbes comes to see his client, Castro on business. He is seated on the verandah smoking an old pipe that he had used perhaps for more than a year. Mr. Gibbes' attorney's eyes are riveted upon the pipe. He gazes at Tom Castro in amazement. "God bless my soul!" he cries; "I have spotted you. You are Roger Tichborne; they have been advertising for you. I see the initials on your pipe."

And sure enough the initials R. C. T. were carved on the bowl of the pipe.

Then Castro begs his friend to be quiet about it. He explains that he put the initials on his pipe out of devilry a year and a half ago. He seems to wish Gibbes to pass the matter over and say no more about it, but the attorney is all agog. "There you are! You are the man!" he cries gleefully. "I did not mean you to see this," says Tom, pocketing his pipe.

"I tell you what," says Gibbes sternly, "if you do not write to your mother in a month I will."

Thus did the dead come to life. The drowned baronet, after eleven years' wholly unnecessary poverty and obscurity, is found again in the bulky person of a common slaughterman at Wagga Wagga under the name of Tom Castro, which he had borrowed from some old friends at Melipilla in Chili, with whom he said he had lived during his South American travels.

Gibbes calls out the good news to Cubitt. Cubitt writes the joyful tidings to Lady Tichborne. The Tichborne family hear of it. The story is canvassed and discussed in the little village of Alresford, in Hampshire. From the confines of the county it passes into the wide world. Roger Tichborne, after eleven years of wandering in the bush, has acknowledged his identity and has written to his mother, who is awaiting his return with joy. It is a stupendous fact, but the world is always ready to accept the miraculous, and if the mother was satisfied why should the general public hesitate to swallow such a golden romance? Of course it was not to be supposed that the Tichbornes in possession of the estates or the trustees of the infant baronet should accept this claimant as eagerly as his mother, but no doubt, when he appeared, they would recognise him and he would enter upon his estates.

But much has to be done before he can make a move. He is very hard up. Gibbes, the faithful attorney, has to finance him with small loans. Cubitt has to convince Lady Tichborne that she must send money over, which her ladyship is only too ready to do. As Tom Castro he was married to a servant girl named Mary Anne Bryant by a Wesleyan minister, and she has just presented him with a girl. It seems good to Sir Roger now to

remember that he has always been a devout Catholic, and so he goes through a second form of marriage before a priest. Nor does the poor fellow desire to challenge the memories of Wagga Wagga with the tale of his adventures, and he writes to his "dear mother" that "I do not wish any person to know me in this country when I take my proper position and title." Therefore he asks for £200 for travelling expenses, and awaits the event in his old position of slaughterman under the name of Castro. Only by his immediate friends may his real name be mentioned.

The good mother replies with enthusiasm. She begs him to try and find his old friend Bogle, a white-headed nigger, formerly a valet to Sir Edward Doughty and now living at Sydney. Bogle is found out, and not only identifies Sir Roger but goes into his service and discourses with him about old times, and finally sails to England with him and acts the part of the old faithful retainer devoted to the persecuted nephew of his old master. That is a character which always touches the hearts of the gods. After the affectionate recognition of his mother the thing that made the man in the gallery certain of the Claimant's honesty was the touching devotion of that dear old white-polled negro, Bogle.

Another old servant of Sir Edward, named Guilfoyle, now turns up, and he, too, identifies Sir Roger, who sits down and on July 14th, 1866, writes to his "Dear Mama," who has not yet sent any letter acknowledging him: "I received your letter yesterday morning and was somewhat disappointed that you did not acknowledge me as your son. Surely my dear Mama you must know my writing; you have cause me a deal of trouble.

But it matters not Has I have no wish to leave a country where I enjoy such good health; I have grown very stout. Yesterday one of Uncle Edwards' Old servants call on me; he been living here a long while; he is name Guilfoyle, you must remember him, He was remodelling the Garden at Tichborne when I was staying at Uncle Edward's. He knew Me as soon as he see me."

Sir Roger had no doubt grown very stout, also he had grown very ungrammatical and somewhat illiterate, but it was all one to Dear Mama, who was ready to welcome her long-lost son in any form in which he might appear.

The faithful Gibbes had gathered together a small band of believers—there is no form of humbug but has a congregation waiting for it—and the believers put their hands in their pockets, Lady Tichborne sends over supplies, and the campaign is started with a capital of some five or six hundred pounds.

The last act of Sir Roger before leaving Australia was to enter into negotiations with Mr. Butts, of the Metropolitan Hotel, to purchase that Hostelry, so that when he had obtained his estates he might return to the country of his adoption and live the life of an hotel-keeper. It is strange how shy Sir Roger had grown of the society of his equals.

On September 2nd, 1866, after an absence from home of over thirteen years, Sir Roger, with his wife and child, a maidservant named Rosina McArthur, old Bogle, and young Butts, the hotel keeper's son, who acted as a sort of secretary to the baronet, sailed for England in the *Rachaia*. They travelled by the overland route across Panama, and took the ship *Sella*, which arrived with its cargo of adventurers in Victoria Docks about half-past

five o'clock on Christmas Day. Directed by Bogle they went straight to Ford's Hotel, in Manchester Square, where Sir Edward used to stay when in London.

Sir Roger had not as yet sent home to his mother any very detailed account of his escape from the *Bella*, nor had he described his life in the underworld of Australia, nor his reasons for his voluntary exile and strange ordeal of unnecessary poverty, nor do we find on his arrival in England that he shows any eagerness to meet his nearest relatives.

He goes down to Alresford, it is true, and there becomes acquainted with good Mr. Rous, the innkeeper, who recognises him. Dr. Lipscombe, a family doctor, and Mr. Edward Hopkins, a retired solicitor, both acknowledge him. But the best friend he makes is Mr. Francis Baigent, a Hampshire antiquary, remotely connected with the family. He becomes an enthusiastic supporter of Sir Roger and assists him to remember much of the family history which had vanished entirely from his memory.

It was not until he had been in England for a considerable time that he put forward any real account of his escape from the *Bella*, and when it did appear it was found that it was not a story that was capable of corroboration or criticism. You must take Sir Roger's word for it, or, if you preferred, you might disbelieve it altogether.

His story was that on the fourth day after the *Bella* left Rio and was out of sight of land, she sprang a leak and all hands were set to work the pumps. This was of no avail, and the captain ordered all on board to take to the boats. Sir Roger, with eight of the crew, was in the second boat. He saw the *Bella* sink. A high wind and storm separated the two boats. After three days

and nights in the open sea in an open boat a sail hove in sight ; a red flannel shirt—a pretty piece of local colour this— belonging to one of the crew was hoisted on an oar as a signal of distress ; the vessel took them all on board and landed them at Melbourne in July, 1854.

Sir Roger had lost all his belongings. He could not, he said, obtain a passage to England, and therefore accepted service with Mr. William Foster a stock breeder of Gipps-land, under the style and title of Thomas Castro, the name of a friend with whom he had lived at Melipilla, in Chili.

Of his further adventures from this date until he was discovered by the attorney, Gibbes, at Wagga Wagga, nothing of note seems to have been said, nor did his mother or those who accepted him as Sir Roger show much desire for detailed information about his Australian career.

His arrival in England soon became publicly known. Paragraphs and stories appear about the prodigal's return, and they are widely read and greedily discussed. Then the public learn that his mother has undoubtedly met him and recognised him, and the great heart of the people beats in sympathy with this touching evidence of the maternal instinct. "What more is required by way of evidence?" asks the man in the street.

Had they heard more details of the matter the supporters of Sir Roger might have been less enthusiastic about him. The selfish prodigal seemed in no hurry at all to meet his "Dear Mama." Lady Tichborne was at this time living in Paris, but her dear boy does not rush across the Channel to throw himself into her arms, nor does he visit his uncles and aunts in town. For some reason or other he goes to live in Gravesend. And one day, when

waiting for a train at Cannon Street, he happened to stroll into a billiard-room and scrape acquaintance with a Mr. Leete, a brewer's traveller, and mentioned to him that he required an attorney. Leete introduced him to Mr. Holmes, who took up his case from the first with keen energy and became a bosom friend of the baronet.

It is not until January 10th that these strange friends go across to Paris, where they put up at the Hôtel Lille et d'Albion. Nothing is done that night, and the next morning poor Sir Roger is taken ill. He dresses himself, however, and lies on his bed. Lady Tichborne comes to see him. Leete and Holmes are in the room. Sir Roger could never give any very clear account in after-days of what happened at this strange interview, but the main thing was satisfactory to all of them, the brewer's agent, the attorney, Sir Roger and Lady Tichborne—the old lady identified and acknowledged that the slaughterman of Wagga Wagga was her dearly beloved Roger Charles Tichborne, baronet and heir to the estates.

It may have been that Sir Roger was to blame in not seeking out his various relatives, but sad it is that, although his mother came to live with him at Croydon and openly espoused his cause and allowed him £1,000 a year to live upon, the trustees and relatives refused to believe in him, and Cousin Kate, now Mrs. Radcliffe, and Vincent Gosford and others declared that he was an impostor.

He was widely recognised by servants and tenants and soldiers of his old regiment, and the world at large was indignant that a man whose mother identified and accepted him should be kept out of the estates to which he was obviously entitled.

Bills are now filed in Chancery and issues are

ordered to be tried. The somewhat meagre story of the wreck of the *Bella* and the rescue of survivors in an open boat appears upon an affidavit. The great litigation, which for three long years was the pride and despair of Westminster Hall, has started on its strange career, and the eager public seize upon each new rumour and discuss it with animated ignorance and irrelevant enthusiasm.

It appears that the Tichborne trustees have learned something about a certain Arthur Orton, a butcher of Wapping, who had stayed with the Castros at Melipilla, in Chili, and emigrated to Australia. He, too, it is said, was a slaughterman in Wagga Wagga, and has now disappeared and cannot be found.

Commissions are sent out to these places, cross-examinations take place upon affidavits, and from time to time details of these things are published, and the public mind is deeply moved. Much educated and legal opinion favoured the Claimant at this period. Sir Roger was a centre of discussion, a topic of the age. He himself shot pigeons at the Gun Club, borrowed money and spent it on legal proceedings, and his memory, under the care of Baigent and Rous and some old soldiers of his regiment, continued to improve daily. The reports of the commissions were not, however, favourable. Lady Tichborne had died in 1868. Poor Sir Roger owed some £30,000 and was threatened with bankruptcy. He could not drop his proceedings. The ball had started rolling and gathered force. "Tichborne bonds" are now issued to keep the litigation going. The public are cheered to know that their hero is to get his rights, and open their purses to subscribe. The ejectment action is set down for trial. Serjeant Ballantine is briefed for

Sir Roger. On May 11th, 1871, the curtain rises on a piece entitled "Tichborne, Bart. v. Lushington and others," one of the strangest legal dramas of modern times.

3. ARTHUR ORTON

Sweet are the uses of cross-examination. Truly it may appear ugly and even venomous at the moment, but in time it will display that precious jewel, truth, to an admiring world. As long as the Claimant contented himself with filing affidavits, sponging on his devoted "mama" and carefully interviewing those who were ready to receive him, he could pose successfully as an "unfortunate nobleman" deprived of his estates. Indeed, every month that passed he became better versed in the story of his own life. Baigent, the crafty antiquary, was at his elbow priming him with the history of the family, Lady Tichborne was living in his house and showing her dear boy all his letters and diaries, and two old soldiers of the 6th Dragoons were taken into his household to coach him about the years of his army service.

But the public invited to the drama were not taken behind the scenes. To them his case for ejectment wore quite a hopeful look in the early scenes. Over forty witnesses were called, many of them persons of the greatest respectability, who identified him with the late Roger Tichborne. The faithful were full of hope.

But they had not yet heard the Claimant's evidence and cross-examination. At length he enters the witness-box. Sir John Coleridge rises to ask a few questions. For twenty-two long days he pursues his feigned and real careers with pitiless but scrupulously fair investigation. Clever and astute and

well rehearsed in every detail as the Claimant was, it appeared that Sir John knew far more about Roger Tichborne and nearly as much about Arthur Orton as the man himself.

There was no hesitation or facing both ways about the case for the defendants. Coleridge was championing the cause of a mother and guardian and an infant child who was to be bereft of his inheritance by the odious cunning of a perjurer, a forger and an imposter. And the only method by which that could be made manifest against the plausible rogue who had victimised Lady Tichborne and so many of her friends was to place before the world, one by one, in detail, by means of cross-examination, hundreds of facts, each undisputed and conclusive, convicting him of lying and fraud.

Roger Tichborne, when he left England in 1852, was a slight delicate youth with narrow sloping shoulders and thin, straight dark hair. Tom Castro, the Claimant, who came to life as Roger Tichborne in 1865, was a man-mountain of enormous bulk, weighing over twenty-four stone, big-framed, with large round face and abundant fair wavy hair. Part of the Claimant's story was that he had stayed with Thomas Castro at Melipilla, in Chili, before he sailed in the *Bella*. Roger Tichborne had certainly never stayed there.

What had really happened was this. Arthur Orton, the son of a butcher at Wapping, born in 1834, afflicted in his youth with St. Vitus's dance, was sent to sea in a boat called the *Ocean* as an apprentice. This vessel arrived at Valparaiso in 1848, and here, in January, 1849, Arthur Orton deserted his ship and struck inland to Melipilla, where he was kindly treated by Don Thomas Castro, who kept a grocery store there. With this family

he lived for over two years, leaving in February, 1851, and returned to Wapping, where he worked with his father and was well known as "Fatty" or "Bullocky Orton."

In December, 1852, the wandering spirit seized him again, and he shipped as butcher on the *Middleton*, and sailed for Hobart Town, where he took a butcher's stall in the new market-place and carried on business for over a year. Then he wandered about, and for some time was in Gipps-land with a Mr. Johnson, and ultimately turned up at Wagga Wagga as a butcher, trading in the name of Thomas Castro. The Claimant's story was that he knew Arthur Orton well, but he could never produce him or anyone who had ever seen him after the day that Thomas Castro, butcher of Wagga Wagga, became Roger Tichborne.

In 1865 Castro was married to a domestic servant, Mary Anne Bryant, by a Wesleyan minister. Roger Tichborne was a devout Catholic. Castro gave his age as 30, just Arthur Orton's age. Tichborne would have been 36. And during all these years Castro had lived in almost abject poverty although, as Roger Tichborne, he must have known that he was entitled to £20,000 a year.

Lady Tichborne's advertisements were now appearing in the Australian papers, and in April, 1865, just as Tom Castro is about to set up his claim to the Tichborne estates, we find him writing to Mr. Richardson, of Wapping, to know how George Orton and his family are getting on. In this letter he says he has written letters to Orton and his old father. "What had old Orton to do with Roger Tichborne?" asks Sir John. But the Claimant cannot explain his interest in the Orton family, and being hard pressed takes refuge in the suggestion that

answers to such questions might tend to criminate him.

There was a little pocket-book in the case kept by Thomas Castro, when he was slaughterman to Higgins, of Wagga Wagga, in 1865, in which occur some curious phrases suggesting the inception in his mind of the fraudulent claim he proposed to make. There are some jottings of much sense and some humour. One of the earliest was: "Surely men with plenty money and no brains where [*sic*] made for men with plenty brains and no money." Further on: "R. C. Tichborne some day I hope," and then, most unlucky experiment of all: "Rodger." Roger Tichborne never spelt his name with a "d," but Tom Castro, *alias* Arthur Orton, did at his first attempt to write it.

An early letter that the Claimant wrote in Mr. Gibbes' office to poor Lady Tichborne is worth setting out at length as one of the most impudent and pitiful human documents that ever found its way into the dossier of a legal drama. He writes from

"WAGGA WAGGA,

January 17th, 66.

MY DEAR MOTHER

The delay which has taken place since my last letter dated 22nd April 54 Makes it very difficult to commence this letter. I deeply regret the trouble and anxiety I must have cause you by not writing before. But they are known to my attorney and the more private details I will keep for your own ear. Of one thing rest assured that although I have been in a humble condition of Life I have never let any Act disgrace you or my family. I have been a poor man & nothing

worse. Mr. Gibbes suggest to me as essential That I should recall to your memory things which can only be known to you and me to convince you of my Identity. I dont thing it needful my Dear Mother. although I send them mainely the Brown mark on my side & the Card Case at Brighton. I can assure you My dear Mother I have Keep your promice ever since ; In writing to me please enclose your letter to Mr. Gibbes to prevent unnesersery enquiry as I do not wish any person to know Me in this Country when I take my proper position and title. Haveng made up my mind to return & face the Sea once more, I must request to send me the means of doing so and paying a few outstanding debts. I would return by the Overland Mail. The passage money and other expences would be over Two Hundred Pound for I propose sailing from Victoria, not this colonly and to sail from Melboure in my own name. Now to annable me to do this My dear Mother you must send me——”

The rest is lost, but one can see the rascal sitting in his attorney's office planning an arrangement by which he can burst on the world as the missing baronet in a strange “colonly” where he will not be subject to “unnesersery enquiry.” There is not a single statement of fact in the letter which is not a falsehood from the point of view of Roger Tichborne. The date of his last letter, 22nd April, is impossible, for the *Bella* had sailed on the 20th ; there was no brown mark on Roger Tichborne's side, and the Card Case at Brighton was a scandal in which two prize-fighters, Johnny and Henry Browne, figured, with which Roger Tichborne had nothing to do.

But the fact is that at this period Tom Castro had an idea that Roger Tichborne was a wild scapegrace who had left England under some sort of cloud, and the stories he told Gibbes of his early life are full of fictions. He had at this period entirely forgotten that he had been educated at Stonyhurst and thought he had been at school with a Christian brother at Winchester; he knew nothing of his three years' service as an officer in the dragoons, but thought he had enlisted in the Army as a private and been bought out by his father after thirteen days. As I have said, he seems to have imagined Roger Tichborne had been really a prodigal son instead of being a young gentleman of fortune, on excellent terms with his people, travelling for amusement.

The most extraordinary document in the case, and one about which he could give no explanation in the witness-box, was the will prepared by his attorney, Gibbes, at Wagga Wagga, made for the purpose of obtaining money from the bank. He had then received a letter from his mother, signed H. F. Tichborne, and was pledged to Gibbes and other creditors to play the part of Tichborne.

In this amazing will, Roger Charles Tichborne, of Tichborne, in the county of Hampshire, but at present of Wagga Wagga, etc., not only invents an estate called Wymmering, in Hampshire, but leaves his mother, "Hannah Frances Tichborne, the whole of my property in Cowes, in the Isle of Wight." Now his mother's name was Henriette Félicité, and Roger Tichborne never had any property in the Isle of Wight. Hannah Frances probably seemed to Arthur Orton the most likely interpretation of H. F., and, anyhow, no one in Wagga Wagga knew any better.

The guardianship of his children he left, in this same document, to Henry Angell, of Dorset, in England, an old friend of his father, George Orton, who used to lodge with him, a worthy old sea captain, no doubt, but a strange guardian for the children of Sir Roger Tichborne. When Coleridge confronted the wretched man with this will he wriggled and twisted to evade answering the questions that naturally arose out of his hotch-potch of lies. In the end he took refuge in the explanation that he had put all the falsehoods in it purposely, as it was only a piece of nonsense which he had invented to get money from the bank. As to the insertion of the name of Henry Angell as guardian of his children, that, he said, was suggested to him by his old friend, Arthur Orton. There was no lie too barefaced for the fellow.

But the most dramatic proof of the man's identity was only obtained from him in reluctant dribblets. He arrives in England on Christmas night, 1866, and goes to Ford's Hotel, Manchester Square. One would imagine that Roger Tichborne, after an absence of twelve long years, would rush to find his mother, or one of his uncles, Alfred or Henry Seymour, or his aunt, Lady Doughty, or Vincent Gosford, or the Hibberts, Townleys, or Greenwoods, or some of his old friends. How many there were who would have rejoiced to welcome the wanderer on Christmas night of all nights in the year. But Tom Castro, *alias* Arthur Orton, dared not show his face to any of them, even if he then knew who they were.

After a hasty dinner he muffles himself up and leaves his hotel and his wife and child and makes off to Wapping. What has Roger Tichborne to do at Wapping? He knocks at the door of 69 High

Street to find that old George Orton is dead and gone, and Arthur Orton's mother is dead also. So he goes into the Globe public-house and sits in the snug to pursue his immediate inquiries into the affairs of the Orton family. He obtains the married sister's address, and so eager is he to learn all about the Ortons, and so shy is he of approaching the Tichbornes, that we find him back again at Wapping early the next morning. The crass folly of it! Wapping was his Waterloo!

Primed as he was about many of the family affairs, he broke down hopelessly over the details of his three years' education at Stonyhurst. Shown the works of Virgil he refused to try and read a word of them, and could not say whether the book was written in Latin or Greek.

"Did you ever read Euclid?" asks the Solicitor-General.

"I do not recollect."

"Has Euclid anything to do with mathematics?"

"Certainly not."

"Did you ever hear of the Asses' Bridge?"

His mind is a blank about all of it. He makes, however, one unlucky shot at Latin translation. He is asked if he remembers the initials L.D.S. on the books and papers of the school. He has no idea of them. He is reminded that they stand for "Laus Deo Semper," as any good Catholic would know. Could he translate that for them? It is worth a shot, and to the delight and gaiety of nations he hazards, "The laws of God for ever!" One cannot but admire the impudence of the rogue. Pages and pages of his lies, the foul falsehoods against Kate Doughty, the bogus story of his rescue in the *Osprey*, the subornation of Jean Luie and the wearisome exposure of the prisoner's crimes are

to be found in the large folios of shorthand notes of his trial at bar for perjury, at the close of which, on 28th February, 1874, after a trial lasting 188 days, he was found guilty and sentenced to fourteen years' penal servitude.

The exposure of this ruffian is said to have cost the Tichborne family £90,000, and the State must have paid at least as much to bring him to justice. The poor people who had subscribed to the cause of the "unfortunate nobleman" lost their all, and some still solaced themselves with the pleasant myth that their money had gone to defend an innocent man from the machinations of a Popish plot.

When the rascal came out of jail he published a more or less true account of his conspiracy, but it is said he went back upon this afterwards. It has really been beyond dispute, since the days of his cross-examination by Sir John Coleridge, that the Claimant was Arthur Orton, butcher of Wapping, and a perjurer and liar of the worst. But in this, as in all other matters, there were those who shut their eyes to evidence and, hugging the maxim, "Vox populi vox dei," to their hearts, refused to part with the generous myth that this low scoundrel was the victim of persecution.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCERNING CROOK DRAMAS

1. WHITAKER WRIGHT. 2. JABEZ BALFOUR.
3. GOUDIE

THE Crook Drama of modern days, in which your sentimental forger or burglar marries the leading lady and enters county society, is really a very old favourite. In olden days the Crook was a more picturesque fellow, generally a highwayman who danced minuets with high-born ladies on the roadside by moonlight.

Then there is another type of Crook Drama, that in which the villain dominates the simple and unpretending through four acts and is exposed to the delight of the gods at the end of the fifth, when he seems to be winning hands down. Shakespeare played with the theme in *Measure for Measure*, and Angelo is a thorough Crook. But if John William Smith, whose "Leading Cases" are still with us, had lived to add a volume of Leading Dramas to his literary works, he would, with his sane instinct, have chosen Molière's *Le Tartuffe ou l'Imposteur* as the leading Crook Drama. From it, in direct line, we get Colley Cibber's *Nonjuror* and Isaac Bickerstaffes *The Hypocrite*, in which, years ago, I saw Phelps play Dr. Cantwell, and Toole, Mawworm. Toole had a similar imposter piece, which he used to play in the provinces, called *The Serious*

Family, and later on came *The Colonel*, in which Tree was L'Imposteur dominating an unhappy family by a gospel of High Art, who were rescued by Coghlan, as a delightful American archangel, with his catching apostrophe, "Why cert'nly!"

At all plays of this class you find the stalls laughing somewhat haughtily at the supreme folly of the Crook's victims. But in real life, history tells us that it is among the inhabitants of the stalls that the Crook finds his best clients, and having captured them with golden lures he sweeps into his net the cheaper fry who follow their financial betters like silly sheep. A few fat and honourable guinea-pigs fed by the hand of the master and allowed to browse on his lawn will attract the whole animal world to the Crook's slaughter-house.

No one knew this truth better than Whitaker Wright and Jabez Balfour, whose legal Crook Dramas are typical instances of financial villainy. Goudie is in another class, and recalls plays like Lillo's tragedy, *The London Merchant*, or *The History of George Barnwell*, and Moore's *Gamester*. Nothing is more popular with the gods than drama lashing their own favourite peccadilloes. Edward Moore, though bred a linen-draper, thoroughly understood this when he planned *The Gamester*. Although they were modest about claiming the honour, it is matter of history that some of our best Victorian actors sprang from the mystery of linen drapery. Your true shop-walker has an instinctive histrionic gait. Success in drapery depends not on what you have to sell but the native tact and courtesy with which you sell it. The literary dramatist believes that he can sell his own wares. It is far from true. They are sold by the linen-draper of the stage, who fling the patterns across the footlights and fascinate the

women in the stalls with their smiles. Therefore, of all persons to write a successful play, commend me to a linen-draper as one likely to deliver the goods.

Edward Moore, in *The Gamester*, wrote a part for Garrick. He thoroughly understood the prejudices of his audiences and, to use a modern phrase, knew "the stuff to give them." No doubt it is stuff, but dramatic stuff and sound playwright's stuff of its kind. Garrick knocked it into shape at rehearsal and acted it. That is how good plays are made. Beverley was certainly a fat part—all fat, in fact, and even in its day was "offensive to some squeamish palates," as fat often is. The piece portrays in highly coloured and forcible scenes the evils of gambling. There are many legal dramas that enforce the same lesson, as, for instance, the story of the bank clerk, Goudie, which is an effective answer to Stukeley's gospel:

"Let drudging fools by honesty grow great,
The shorter road to riches is deceit."

The records of legal Crook Dramas go to show that at long last the law generally gets the better of the Crook.

I. WHITAKER WRIGHT

When the tipstaff touched Whitaker Wright on the shoulder and led him through a door beneath the Bench, out of the sight of the world for ever, many a City man in the crowded court must have felt a cold chill in his heart and remembered the pious thought of the good old Puritan as the criminals in the cart passed him in the street: "But for the grace of God there goes John Bradford."

For W.W., as the knowing ones called him, had been the idol of the market-place. He was reputed to have wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, his speculations seemed to be inspired by the touch of Midas, all his paper turned into gold, he surrounded himself on his boards by directors of the noblest houses, men of unblemished honour, and his career, both here and in America, had been a path of financial roses, roses, all the way.

He had leaped at the sun and seemed to handle the gold of it, and the world applauded his daring and success, and flocked to purchase his paper and share in his good fortune. To be a nominee of W.W., when a new issue was forward, was to be a wayfarer on the road to fortune. Old father antick, the law, was sulking in his den, looking disapproval at these high jinks of finance. The clever ones said that W.W. knew too much for the old gentleman and had brought a bag of tricks from across the Atlantic that would bluff him off the Bench if he dared to attack their hero. Even the high priests of the law nearly shirked the encounter when the world called upon them to come into the ring. But at long last the law stretched out its arm, and this golden hero was found to be but a common gambler packing the cards and loading the dice in the old ignoble way.

W.W. was an adventurer from the first. His life is the very picaresque of finance. Born in 1845 in the north of England, equipped with some knowledge of chemistry and assaying, we find him at an early age settled in the United States, where he buys a claim for 500 dollars, sells half to provide working capital, proves the mine and works it successfully, and, to use his own words, "After the first 10,000 dollars was made the rest was easy." This specula-

tion was the foundation of his fortune. In 1879 he was in the Leadville boom, making and losing two fortunes there, and at the age of thirty-one he was more than a millionaire and a leading figure in the mining and stock-broking world of New York. But money won at the tables is always elusive. He could not hold what he had gained, and he was brought down by the failure of an iron and coal company.

About 1889 he came to England and floated numerous mining and speculative companies. In the early 'nineties he made over £200,000 and began to attract to his circle all sorts and conditions of men, who were seized with the common mania of desiring riches without equivalent labour. W.W. was a buoyant, pleasant, hospitable soul who knew the ins and outs of mining life and mining camps, had the appearance of being knowledgeable in business affairs and ready to share his certain prospects of gain with his fellow-men. He had all the gifts and arts of the Tigg Montague school, and from his Offices and his board-rooms there issued to the grateful world new paper of Lake Views, Mainland Consols, Paddington Consols, Wealth of Nations, exploring and finance corporations, and all those Eldorados which tickle the greed and fool the simplicity of the City gambler.

The most noted of all these companies was the London and Globe Financial Corporation, the parent of the brood and a popular instrument of speculation. This company's balance-sheets from time to time showed substantial profits, on which dividends were paid. The company—which like all the rest of them was a pseudonym for W.W.—engaged in large market operations in shares of the Wright group. In 1899, for instance, Lake Views

went from £9 to £28, and the followers of W.W. rejoiced. All these companies—the London and Globe, the British America Corporation, the Standard Exploration Company and many others, were housed in one office at Lothbury, staffed by one set of clerks, and although nominally directed by noble lords and eminent laymen, these good men were literally only pawns on the board, and the whole business of the companies was absolutely controlled and directed by Whitaker Wright himself. So much so, indeed, that, although the articles of the London and Globe demanded that two directors should sign cheques, yet W.W. did not permit this, and every cheque was signed by himself and a secretary.

In 1899 Lake Views were in an ailing condition. There was a struggle of bears and bulls over the patient. W.W. threw down his glove and rushed up his reserves to support his moribund property. The other fellows were too many for him. He threw three-quarters of a million down the throat of Lake Views, but Lake Views could not be persuaded to sit up and take notice. All the gold in Lothbury seemed to turn to paper and ashes. The London and Globe put up its shutters. It is only by a free use of mixed metaphors that one can describe what seems to have happened.

Many people were ruined, but W.W. had at least a home to shelter him. He had a house in Park Lane filled with art treasures. He had a glorious estate at Witley, near Godalming, and here, as at Solomon's palace—

“Fish-ponds were made, where former forests grew,
And hills were levelled to extend the view.”

Indeed W.W. out-Solomoned Solomon in his lavish extravagance, for at the bottom of one of his

fish-ponds he constructed a billiard-room of glass, where gaping carp could watch the great financier making losing hazards.

As long as the London and Globe had been regular with its 10 per cent dividend these evidences of W.W.'s greatness were spoken of in reverent whispers, but now the hungry ones out in the cold were clamouring for their destruction. Actions were brought against him by the disappointed to get their money back, but these were not successful. And then occurred what often happens in these popular movements—the mob that had been gambling and speculating as they had thought with considerable skill and success began to discover that they had been tricked and fooled. They had no more roses and flags and joy bells for their hero, they would not even let him rest in his palaces in peace; every man who had gambled with him and lost seized a stone to pelt him for his misdeeds, and there was a rush to the offices of the Public Prosecutor to see what he could do to help them to revenge.

Complicated and mysterious as the details of W.W.'s finance must always remain to the man in the street, one thing was abundantly clear, that he had kept the golden balls in the air by the financial juggler's common trick of issuing false balance-sheets. But the Public Prosecutor and the Attorney-General shook their heads over the notion that this was a matter with which they were in any way concerned.

This attitude made the great heart of the people beat vigorously to arms. W.W.'s list of guinea-pig directors unfortunately contained the names of many noblemen and gentlemen of high degree. The man in the street jumped to the erroneous

conclusion that high officials were protecting these aristocrats, and this made him very angry.

The first remarkable scene in the legal drama was staged in the House of Commons. An amendment to the address was moved expressing regret that no proceedings had been commenced against the directors. The popular view was that if a little man embezzled £100 the law swooped down upon him at once, and that if a bigger man embezzled several £100,000 it was not dignified in the law to sit with folded arms and do nothing. The commercial view was that the whole thing had been a gamble, and gamblers should not squeal about their losses, but that false balance-sheets of any kind were serious crimes, and their authors should be run in.

But for some reason or other the eminent Government lawyers saw difficulties in the way of framing an indictment. The Solicitor-General indeed went so far as to say that he fully believed that W.W. had issued a false balance-sheet, "but," he asked, "would anyone get up and say that he could be prosecuted because he published a false balance-sheet?" This challenge was accepted by several who were better versed in English law than the Solicitor-General. Nevertheless, the House stood by the Government officials, and the amendment was defeated. As the curtain fell on the first scene the hero was in the limelight and the mob were heard "off" grumbling viciously.

Early in 1903 the scene is moved to the Law Courts. A motion is made before Mr. Justice Buckley that he should order the Official Receiver to prosecute. W.W. is not on in this scene, having removed himself to Paris. A friend who listens to the arguments wires him that "everything looks bad case for prosecution settled."

W.W. takes ship for America in the name of Mr. Andreone. Mr. Justice Buckley takes a far rosier view of the possibilities of an indictment against persons who issue false balance-sheets than did the Solicitor-General. He orders the Official Receiver to prepare one and give it a trial, so to speak. W.W. is met on arrival by the police, and returns to take the trial, which comes on in due course in January, 1904.

It was a trial at bar in the King's Bench and heard at the Law Courts. Mr. Justice Bigham presided, and the leading counsel for the prosecution was Mr. Rufus Isaacs, K.C. It was ill-fortune for W.W. that he should have come up against two of the greatest business experts in the profession. There was no difficulty in framing an indictment, section 83 of the Larceny Act, 1861, having been specially made and provided to check the kind of financial monkeying with balance-sheets with which W.W. was charged.

The one hope of the prisoner was that the jury would be so muddled and bemused by the complications of W.W.'s methods of finance that they would not understand the crime he had committed. But Rufus Isaacs and Bigham between them made manifest what had been done. It was clearly exhibited that when the London and Globe balance-sheets had to be made up the Company was usually insolvent; that thereupon W.W., manager of A Company, entered into paper transactions with W.W., manager of B, C and D Companies, and filled the coffers of the London and Globe for the moment. Within ten days of a balance-sheet being issued, showing £463,000 profit, the Company was hopelessly bankrupt. The inner machinery of the manipulations by which the £463,000 was produced was displayed piece by piece and patiently explained.

The jury did their duty, and at the end of a long and fair trial found Whitaker Wright guilty of the offences with which he was charged.

The man himself was under no illusion about what the end of the trial must be. On the last day he came down to the court prepared for a conviction. He sat whilst Mr. Justice Bigham summed up to the jury, scribbling mechanically upon a piece of blotting-paper "W's" made of four downward pen strokes, also the word, on which the whole case turned, "INTENT" in capitals, and ever and again in Roman numerals "VII," in prophetic assurance of the term of years to which he knew he would be sentenced.

When the judge had pronounced the sentence, the prisoner, with folded arms and in a clear voice, asserted his innocence of any intent to defraud his shareholders, and content with that followed the tipstaff and made his last exit from the public stage.

Within twenty minutes or so of the end of the trial, in a room of the court, talking with his friends and about to light a second cigar, he throws down the lighted match on the ground and falls forward, breathing heavily.

A doctor is sent for and finds him dying. His romantic career is over. The light of life in him flickers slowly out. He has poisoned himself with cyanide of potassium. Had that failed he had in his pocket a new American revolver with six loaded chambers. He had rattled the dice and packed the cards for the last time. His game had been exposed and condemned. He had played his last trump and handed in his checks. Let the curtain fall.

2. JABEZ BALFOUR

Jabez Balfour seems to have persuaded himself that he was an ill-used man, but in truth he was a

great criminal. Nevertheless, the financial crimes he suffered for were not his worst actions. The world would have forgiven him for juggling with figures but what made his fellow-citizens shudder at the name of him was his cruelty and hypocrisy. He was a despoiler of the widow and the fatherless. He caused the widow's heart to sing with joy by promising her a financial share in land schemes flowing with milk and honey, and callously ruined her by financial dishonesty.

But one is bound to admit the greatness of him as a criminal. It is always an attribute of greatness to damn the consequences—to others. Had Jabez stooped to defend his actions he would have reminded us that a general, intent on famous victories, cannot stop to inquire too closely into their effect upon the human lives and homes and industries which must necessarily be sacrificed to his glory. He would have explained, too, that the statesman who has a great policy to carry through, or is in difficulties about retaining office, never allows his mind to dwell upon the world-suffering his experiments produce; that even the surgeon has on occasion to steel his heart to the pain he is causing; and that the lawyer—the most faithful and modest of the world's servants—makes a practice of taking his costs out of the estate even though the orphan beneficiaries are thereby reduced to beggary.

To the end of his life he boasted, as Napoleon might have done, of his victories in bricks and mortar as “an abiding memorial of my enterprise.” “Look,” he cried, “at Whitehall Court”—the pioneer of the fashionable flat-system of London—“the Hotel Cecil, Hotel Victoria, the Albert Mansions and the great suburban estates! These are my handiwork!” It was nothing to this strong

man that his palaces were built on the ruins of many hundreds of poor homes, and the mortar of his buildings was mixed with the blood and tears of widows and orphans.

Jabez Balfour was born in 1843. He was educated in France and Germany. His father had a subordinate office in Government service. His mother was a writer of devout and moral books. He himself was brought up on *Self-Help* and *Duty*, the sailing regulations of many a young Victorian. When Dr. Samuel Smiles wrote *Self-Help*, he little thought how many of his young disciples would construe self-help into the pleasanter duty of helping yourself. The good Doctor has a lot to answer for.

Balfour set out from the first to succeed. He worked hard as clerk to a firm of parliamentary agents, then became manager, then partner. He was one of the original directors of the Lands Allotment Company and that famous Minotaur among limited companies, the Liberator Building Society. In 1870 he became managing director of this company.

His early business and public life was spent in Croydon. He was first mayor in 1883. He became a Member of Parliament in 1880. He was a member of the Croydon School Board. A noted man in Nonconformists circles. In a word a pious, successful, busy citizen, true to the Smiles type and outwardly reacting to the Smiles tests.

He continued to prosper in the eyes of his fellow-men. He moved from Croydon to Marlborough Gate. He bought an estate at Burcot, in Oxfordshire and was a model landlord. He continued his parliamentary career, and was regarded by the world as a model citizen, philanthropic, religious, honest, and above all successful. This continued

until 1892, when there came a crash, and in December of that year Jabez Spencer Balfour, the white hope of Nonconformity, fled to Argentina with a pocketful of other people's money, and, what was even more shocking to the faithful, a lady who did not legally belong to him.

The Liberator had gone down for ever with £7,000,000 of the money of small investors, and thousands of homes were ruined beyond hope of restoration.

The drama of Balfour's career was a continued contest for nearly twenty years against the laws of his country. To carry on his chosen life, to keep his companies on their feet and to build his palaces, he had to charm out of the pockets of the unwary a constant supply of ready money. That he possessed certain great qualities must be recognised. He was a man of iron nerve. At any moment during many, many years, an inquiring shareholder, an honest and efficient co-director, a sharp auditor or even a common policeman might have burst the bubble on which his career was founded. But he seems to have been a man able to live in apparent happiness, gratifying his immediate daily wants without any thought of the Nemesis of to-morrow. One thinks that in the course of years he came to believe that his luck was eternal, or even, perhaps, that he was an honest and godly man walking in the paths of righteousness. The psycho-analysts tell us that there is no limit to our powers of self-deception.

When one comes to study the methods by which this reckless speculator balanced himself on the whirling globe of the financial world, one is surprised at the simplicity of his plans and his supreme confidence in the negligence and inefficiency of those of his colleagues who were honest men.

Somewhere about 1880 the Liberator was in a bad way. There was in the same offices another company run by Balfour, called the House, Land and Investment Company. In order to attract public investment in these companies it was necessary to show on paper that they were earning large sums and also to pay out dividends. As a matter of fact these companies made no profit from 1880 to 1892, but during the whole of that time their appearance of prosperity was wonderfully maintained.

One method of window-dressing was for the two companies to interchange cheques, showing on paper transactions of tens or hundreds of thousands that had no real existence. One clerk drew a cheque, and another clerk drew a cheque, and lo and behold, there appeared in the reports and profit and loss accounts and balance sheets of the companies credible accounts of money made, upon which dividends are paid, and now fools rush in with ready money to share in the milk and honey.

But this simple scheme alone would not have sufficed for twenty years. It appears that, whilst in Croydon, Balfour found a man named Newman, a carpenter and surveyor, Hobbs, a builder, and a solicitor named Wright. Hobbs was a town councillor and Mayor of Croydon after Balfour. In the 'eighties Newman became Newman Limited. Hobbs, who was insolvent to the tune of £26,000, also became a Limited Company. Wright was the solicitor to many of the concerns. The game then was for the Liberator to finance these dummy companies. They were "profit makers." Contracts were made with them, in respect of which a few pounds at most passed, but these contracts were made the basis of accounts showing profits earned. On these so-called profits dividends were paid, and

again new shareholders rushed in to provide money for further speculations.

The vastness of these bogus transactions may be appreciated when one learns that Hobbs, Ltd., starting in a state of insolvency in 1885, owed the Liberator £2,000,000 when the crash came, and just prior to this the Real Estates Company, another dummy, took over Newman's liability of over £600,000, and in the final account was found to be indebted to the Liberator in a sum of £1,300,000. This Real Estates Company had started with a capital of £178, but it was treated for the purposes of balance-sheets as a solvent creditor, and transactions with it were entered in the Liberator books as real transactions.

It may seem extraordinary that among the noble and simple directors that adorned the various boards of these companies no man was found honest and efficient enough to understand and expose what was going on, but the guinea-pig is not an animal of much natural intelligence, and Balfour chose his collection of guinea-pigs with care and circumspection. There were, indeed, upon these boards only two classes of beings, colleagues who were in with Balfour and playing his game, and tame creatures worshipping at his shrine and thankfully feeding out of his hand. Had there been on the directorate of the Liberator a few honest men of real capacity and industry in the business they had undertaken for the shareholders, it seems impossible that these gross and impudent frauds could have succeeded.

In 1892 the crash came. After a hard-fought election at Burnley, Balfour returns to London and finds that at last he has to face the music. But the disaster is even bigger than anything he could hope

to account for. A liquidator is appointed. The great Liberator is smashed. The golden financial idol falls to the ground, and the fragments are found to be very common clay. Seven millions of poor people's money are said to be lost for ever. A wail goes up from every district in the country, and in every chapel in the villages there is sorrow and misery. A howl of execration is raised from every quarter against the great man who had led so many to destruction. His lieutenants, Hobbs, Wright and Newman, are arrested. He himself dare not face the music and withdraws quietly to Argentina, with whose republic we have no satisfactory arrangements about extradition.

There seemed to be a distinct misunderstanding between the apostle and his disciples as to the true causes of the disaster. Hobbs and Newman openly blamed Balfour's methods for the result, whilst on the other hand Balfour complained bitterly of the way in which his orders had been misinterpreted. Had he stood his trial with the others I think he might have satisfied the court that he had not personally approved of Hobbs stealing the money of the Liberator by falsifying balance-sheets, or of certain forgeries committed by others. His colleagues might, of course, have rejoined that their acts were necessary to enable them to live in fine country houses with greenhouses, stables, horses and carriages, and thereby attract investors to come in with them and share their prosperity.

When after nearly three years of exile the reluctant, Balfour returned to England in custody to take his trial, it was proved against him that on one occasion he had shared a £20,000 illegal commission with Wright, but it was wonderful how the master-mind that had undoubtedly created the system of finance

which had ruined so many lives had been careful to allow the actual working of it to be the overt acts of his dupes and understudies.

The punishment of the wrongdoers was severe and exemplary. Hobbs and Wright were awarded twelve years' penal servitude and Newman three years'. The two trials of the Master were dull affairs enough. He had convicted himself when he fled the country, and it was not considered a harsh sentence for the wrongs he had committed that he should be sent to penal servitude for fourteen years.

There were some who were inclined, knowing how rife the frauds of company-mongers and promoters were throughout the financial world, to regard Jabez Balfour as a scapegoat. Goat he certainly was, and one of the extreme left, and the cause of ruin to many righteous sheep; but his callous hypocrisy stills any feeling of pity for his fate.

He served his sentence and came back to the world to write a book of admirable restraint and sense about his prison life, wisely abstaining from any defence of his crimes. His capacity of living each day without any thought of the morrow must have stood him in good stead during the terrible ordeal he underwent in jail. But to a normal man the years of his prosperity, when he was daily living over an abyss which at any moment might open and devour him, would have been more terrifying and nerve-racking than a life in jail.

Balfour was the hero and centre of interest in a long antagonistic drama between the adventurer and the law. In the course of it he was ready to sacrifice his fellow-citizens. He made a brave struggle, but the law prevailed, and he did not murmur at his defeat. Leaving the dock after his

sentence, they brought him cold meat and champagne, and he made a last hearty meal with philosophic enjoyment of the good things he was parting from. Simple, great and selfish to the last.

3. GOUDIE

To make the elaborate cunning and the trusting simplicity of Thomas Petersen Goudie at all comprehensible, and to explain to an audience the reckless enthusiasm with which he laboured to destroy the wealth of his employers, a playwright would seek to write a prologue with some atmosphere of wizardry about it.

He might picture for us young Goudie in his Shetland home, that strange wild land of stacks and skerries, of voes and geos, of cliffs and caves, an ardent boy hero descended from a race of Norse pirates eager to follow in the footsteps of his ancestors. Some Norna of the Fitful Head would chant to him the old sagas, casting a spell over him and implanting in his young mind a predatory desire to sail for Southern lands of promise and spoil the fair-haired Saxon.

Dwelling, too, in a primitive land of knitted wool and pleasant little ponies we should see him in his daily island life a simple peasant lad, bound to be an easy prey in the later scenes of the drab conspirators of the Saxon race-course.

These things may be but fancies, and Goudie, after all, may have been nothing but a vain eccentric criminal. All we know is that he was a Shetlander, and arrived in early life at Liverpool with excellent testimonials. Alas, these testimonials are too often the prelude to a career of crime. It is so hard to live up to their text. The knowledge of their falsehood shames the modesty of youth.

At the end of 1901 Thomas Petersen Goudie was twenty-nine years old. He had been a clerk in the Bank of Liverpool for seven or eight years. He was regarded as a reliable, active and intelligent servant by all at the bank. He lived in lodgings, for which he paid a pound a week, including board, and he had a small account at the bank into which he paid his savings. In all outward respects a modest careful young fellow living up to the written word of his testimonials.

He had risen to the post of ledger-clerk and had control of the accounts H to K, and any cheques on the Hudson account, a name redolent of soap and millions, which came through the clearing-house, were brought to Goudie to be entered in the ledger.

On November 21st the drama of which Goudie was the unsuspected hero came to a sudden conclusion. The accountant of the bank remarked to him that it was very curious that there was a cheque in the clearing-book that was not in the Hudson ledger account. Goudie agreed and suggested it must have been entered by mistake in a wrong account. He went aside and made an entry in another account and left the ink to dry. This he presently showed to the accountant, but by this time that official had been to the file to look for the actual cheque and found that it was missing. "That," remarked Goudie, "was for the porter to explain," and as this official was away at the moment Goudie got his hat and umbrella and stepped out to get his lunch. In this unceremonious manner did he resign his appointment. Two months later he was found in obscure lodgings in abject poverty. He was arrested, and in February, 1902, pleaded guilty at the Central Criminal Court, to robbing

his employers of a hundred and sixty thousand pounds.

His methods had been simple in the extreme, and he had carried them on without interruption for about three years. He had access to all the Hudson cheques, and he made a most excellent forgery of Hudson's signature. Being a customer of the bank himself he was able to buy a cheque over the counter. He then forged a cheque for any amount of money he wished. The amount of his forgeries varied from £3,000 to £30,000, and these cheques were, as a matter of course, met by the bank. When a cheque came to the bank to be paid it was handed to the clearing department. Here a clerk entered it into a journal. This journal was handed with the cheques to Goudie to be entered in the ledger. The entries were never made, and Goudie destroyed the cheques instead of filing them. Of course he carefully "ticked" the journal to make it appear that all was in order.

There was, however, more to be attended to. Weekly balance-sheets had to be falsified, and at the times of audit false debits had to be entered in other accounts and put right after the audit was over by entries of false credits.

All this was done with such skilful elaboration that for a long period thousands of pounds were taken from the bank by cheques of varying but constantly increasing amounts. The puzzle in the case was what had become of the money? If Goudie had not made up his mind to make a clean breast of it the real villains of the piece would perhaps have got away with the booty. But he certainly owed no gratitude to his fellow-thieves, who had robbed him with as little compunction as he had robbed the bank.

Goudie was a victim to the lure of gambling. About three years before his arrest he had started betting. He made small bets of five shillings or a pound at most. He had ups and downs, but like most ignorant backers his losses were greater than his gains. He began then to forge the Hudson cheques, and finding this a simple way of satisfying his tastes he continued his depredations.

He now opened a banking account at Lloyds Bank, into which he paid £10,000 in the name of John Style, a pretended oil and colour merchant. By this means he could increase his wagers, and whereas he was formerly content to lose fives and tens, he was now able to lose hundreds and thousands.

A pigeon of this plump and healthy character could not flutter abroad within the curtilage of the race-course without attracting the hawks that are to be found perched upon those queer boxes which are not "places within the meaning of the Act."

The first gentlemen of the road who took to plucking him and afterwards pleaded guilty to conspiring to defraud the bank were Kelly and Stiles. Kelly was a Bradford man who followed racing, and Stiles had been a runner for a book-maker. These two worthies met poor Goudie in a railway train, journeying to town, and invited him to a game of cards. They found him to be a youth with an extraordinary capacity for believing any kind of story that was told to him. The next day they invited him to Hurst Park Races and proceeded to victimise the poor wretch by "telling the tale." Stiles was a man of enormous fortune who often had £5,000 or £10,000 on a race. Stiles would let Goudie have a share of his bets. Poor Goudie was delighted with his condescension, and though he was £230 down on the day Stiles consoled him

by promising to do big business for him in the future and win it all back. Goudie returned to Liverpool and wrote grateful letters to his comrades, enclosing cheques.

Stiles, however, had a run of bad luck, and Goudie had the consolation of hearing that Stiles' losses were greater than his. In this way each of these rascals got several thousand pounds of the bank's money through the medium of their simple young friend.

But they could not hope to keep such a delicious morsel to themselves, with so many hungry crooks around, and what may be described as a Goudie Exploitation Syndicate was soon formed in the racing underworld to work the claim on scientific principles. The three shareholders were Burge, a prize-fighter in debt and difficulties, Mances, who had a room in a Charing Cross hotel and practised the profession of a card sharper, and Marks, a small starting-price bookmaker in the Adelphi.

Burge got to know that there was a bank clerk in Liverpool shedding gold about the race-course. He and Mances went down to spy out the land. Burge pointed out Goudie, and Mances went up to him at once saying: "You go in for racing. I have seen you with Kelly and Stiles. You are a clerk in a bank at Liverpool and can command a lot of money." Goudie was frightened, but Mances soothed him, assuring him that he was not a detective but an American and a friend of a jockey called Ballard, who could give them any number of winners. He would introduce him to a bookmaker who worked for all the wealthy Jews, and this bookmaker, Marks and Co., would let him have £5000 on any race within an hour of starting.

Goudie had never met such friends as these. They were even better fellows than Kelly and Stiles.

He would now retrieve all his losses with a little luck. But no luck came. He wired Mr. Marks on Mances' advice: "Hedera 5000. T. P. Scott." Scott was his *nom de sport*. The reply came from town: "You are on Hedera 5000. Marks." Of course no bet was made and Hedera lost, but Goudie was not dismayed. More cheques were forged and more imaginary bets were made. On one day Goudie sent Marks three cheques in a registered envelope, two for £9000 each and one for £7000. Marks began to advertise as a bookmaker in a large way, and opened a banking account with the *Crédit Lyonnais*. Burge opened a banking account. Mrs. Burge did the same. Mances invested £33,000 in Consols.

For three weeks this mad traffic continued, Goudie never winning. He did spot one winner at 5-2, but Marks unfortunately did not get the money on, whereby Goudie missed £25,000. The last two cheques he sent out were £30,000 and £31,000, which the conspirators divided. It was now increasingly difficult to hide the swag. Banks became suspicious and made inquiries of each other. Such wild transactions were bound to come to a sudden end. The crash came on November 21st. Two days afterwards warrants were issued at Bow-Street against Marks, Mances and Burge.

Marks packed a bag and left his hotel for Brighton, where he doubled across the Downs to Newhaven and went to France. He had not time to take his money with him, and a few days later he wired to Inspector Frost, who was in charge of the case, that he would surrender at Folkestone. The inspector met the boat. Marks had sailed from Boulogne, his bag was on board, but its owner had vanished. It seems clear that he committed suicide by jumping

overboard. Mances changed two thousand pounds into French money and got away. Burge remained to take his trial. He had never met Goudie personally nor signed anything in his own name, but the prosecution were able to show that he was the real promoter of the scheme and had drawn his share of the loot. Mr. Justice Bigham considered him nearly the equal of Goudie in wickedness, and assigned him terms of imprisonment amounting in all to the ten years' penal servitude which he had awarded to Goudie himself. Under the indictment to which the two lesser scoundrels pleaded guilty, two years' imprisonment was the maximum sentence, and the judge expressed his opinion that it was insufficient for the crime they had committed.

One cannot read the story of the young clerk without pity for his indescribable folly and anger at the wickedness of those who fastened upon him and dragged him remorselessly into deeper abysses of crime. He never seems to have spent any money on himself, and was guilty of no extravagance or vicious indulgence. He was a moral idiot on the subject of gambling, and seemed to take pleasure in paying away huge sums of money under the impression—a false one in most cases—that he was paying gaming debts. One cannot help wishing that he and his testimonials had remained in Shetland, and that he had never been subject to the temptations of a bigger island.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCERNING A DRAMATIC HERO

CHARLES PEACE

I. HIS GREATNESS. 2. THE LAST PHASE

IT was Fielding who first pointed out that the sages were misleading the world when they endeavoured to confound the ideas of greatness and goodness, and indeed he went so far as to insist that they were entirely distinct from each other, and that "greatness consists in bringing all manner of mischief on mankind, and goodness in removing it from them."

And what do we find in drama and history? Cæsar, Macbeth, Marlborough and Napoleon—these are your really great men. No mealy-mouthed fellows these with scruples about their duty to their neighbours. For the acid test of all true greatness is selfishness. The sublime egoism that transmutes every action, however debased, into the really golden rule, the readiness to sacrifice and destroy anyone that stands in your path, the power to compass the ruin of your enemies and watch their death struggles with indifference—these are the necessary attributes of greatness.

Choose the names of your great ones as you will : Solomon, Alexander, Mahomet, Luther, Queen Elizabeth, Catherine de Medici, Cromwell, Walpole

or Parnell—a miscellaneous bag certainly—and you will find that though they all react to tests for greatness you may analyse their tendencies towards mere goodness with disappointing results. No doubt each and all had many good qualities, but their greatness is in no way dependent on righteousness. Success and the attainment of supreme power in that state of life to which men call themselves—these are the only necessary attributes of greatness.

And this is why great men are better discerned from afar. “Few men are admired by their servants,” says Montaigne, and it is for this reason probably that dramas of hero worship on the stage seldom attain lasting success. There is too much hero and too little else. Greatness is difficult to express by the human physical representation of a finite actor, though it can perhaps be hinted at in the written word.

Plays about Cromwell, Napoleon or Elizabeth are generally more interesting to read in the study than to see upon the boards. For stage success one requires a chronicle play of their deeds, but that gives but a poor demonstration of that compelling motive power ambition which is the force that pushes your hero along his predestined path to throne or scaffold.

Of Charles Peace one may certainly say that he had ambition, and, as Fielding said of his great prototype, “as his most powerful and predominant passion was ambition, so nature had, with consummate propriety, adapted all his faculties to the attaining those glorious ends to which this passion directed him. He was extremely ingenious in inventing designs, artful in contriving the means to accomplish his purposes, and resolute in executing them: for as the most exquisite cunning and most

undaunted boldness qualified him for any undertaking, so was he not restrained by any of these weaknesses which disappoint the views of mean and vulgar souls, and which are comprehended in one general term of honesty."

This is as true of Charles Peace as it was of Jonathan Wild, and as we do honour to the greatness of statesmen and conquerors who ruin worlds and destroy the homes and happiness of thousands, let us not withhold our meed of admiration from a great man like Charles Peace, who devoted his life to the minor art and craft of burglary and took humble tribute from individual citizens. In a narrow sphere he is pre-eminent. In the hagiology of housebreaking the sainted figure of Charles Peace stands in solitary grandeur—clear and illumined on the golden pinnacles of crime.

I. HIS GREATNESS

In the drama of his life Charles Peace always cast himself for the part of hero. Students of the histrionic art will at once recognise in this a trait of greatness. Peace's exploits were one-man shows, no doubt, but then he was the actor-manager, so what could you expect? What really great actor ever disclaimed the fat part, full of good lines and central situations? Indeed, may we not say that it is the actor who teaches us how a reputation is achieved, and it is through the actor that the secret of greatness is made manifest?

But that Charles Peace was a really great man I cannot doubt. Take, for instance, the Whalley Range murder, committed on August 1st, 1876, for which the unfortunate William Habron was tried and convicted. How few men could have dealt with the matter with the calm sincerity and true

greatness of Peace. A day or two before his own execution he sends for the Rev. J. H. Littlewood, the Vicar of Darnall, near Sheffield, whose church and Sunday-school he affected when he lived and worked his burglaries from that simple village. To him he gives the story of the affair in business-like detail. He had "spotted" a house at Whalley Range which he proposed to "work." He did not "work" a house until he had carefully surveyed the approaches. Like the great statesmen of to-day he "explored every avenue," but, unlike these great ones, as soon as he had done so he was prompt in action. His methods of evading the police in these reconnaissances have all the simplicity of true greatness. "I was," he says, "always respectably dressed; I made a point of dressing respectably because I knew the police never think of suspecting one who appears in good clothes. In this way I have thrown the police off their guard many a time." What profound insight into the psychology of policemen.

And then he goes on to tell the good Vicar how the foolhardy officer brought his fate upon himself. He was indiscreet enough to disturb Peace at his work. The burglar jumped over a wall to escape, and being "nettled" fired at the policeman to disable him. The plucky officer closed with him, and Peace shot him dead. Here he explained to the clergyman with great earnestness: "And now, sir, I want to tell you, and I want you to believe me, that I always made it a rule during the whole of my career never to take life if I could avoid it. I never wanted to murder anybody. I only wanted to do what I came to do and to get away. But the policeman, like most Manchester policemen, was a determined man. They are a very obstinate lot,

these Manchester policemen." Some may think that there is a touch of weakness here in this anxiety about human life that falls short of the Napoleonic ideal and detracts from true greatness. But even the greatest general does not destroy, still less risk his own destruction, out of mere bravado.

The biography of Charles Peace remains to be written. There is a modest anonymous narrative of his career, with strange wood-cuts dear to humble lovers of romance, and pamphlets, Press memoirs, and what not, but no cyclopædic effort as yet worthy of the man and his greatness. Like all great men he was wholly self-educated; no Board School can blazon his name on its panels. Born in Sheffield on the 14th May, 1832, the son of a caretaker of animals in Wombwell's menagerie, he grew up in the gutters of his native city a handy self-reliant pickpocket. As a youth he played at public-house music-rooms, blacking his face and scraping tunes on a one-stringed freak fiddle of his own making, under the stage name of the "Great Ethiopian Musician, the Modern Paganini." But he was born for something higher than mere mock Ethiopian greatness, and this profession had no prizes for him.

But his talent for music was often used in his early adventures when, as John Ward, he would make love to Fanny, the housemaid, become a friend and boon companion of the servants' hall, entertain them with song and mimicry and fiddle at their Christmas party, and then walk off with the silver in the early hours of the morning.

One of his earliest and favourite disguises was that of a one-armed sailor. The hook at the end of the property arm was useful in hauling on to the branch of a tree to reach a window-sill or to grapple on to the top of a portico. Nature had gifted him

with extraordinary strength and agility, attributes which the evolutionist would explain to you showed that he was probably intended to be a housebreaker and strikingly illustrated the truth of the theory of the survival of the fittest. The course of evolution, however, never runs too smoothly. Picking pockets led to the police-court, and housebreaking, though at first successful beyond youthful hopes, received a check when our hero, at the age of twenty-two, was captured at the house of a well-known "fence," and sentenced to five years' penal servitude.

This might have broken the heart of a smaller man or lured him to safe and respectable ways. At first his great nature rebelled against his surroundings. He made wild efforts to escape. At Portland he headed a mutiny and was punished with the "cat" and sent to work at Gibraltar, where he was suspected of the murder of a fellow-convict who had "nettled" him. This poor fellow disappeared one foggy night, and his body was found in the morning crushed at the bottom of a precipice. It may have been an accident. Later on, at Portland, he settled down as a model convict. He taught himself carving and made ingenious paper models, to the admiration of the authorities. This was a period of thought, resolve and plans for future greatness. He had learned the lesson that force is no remedy, and he based his future work on the great principles of cunning and deceit, keeping force in reserve for some final crisis. Released in 1858, he married Hannah Ward and worked under the name of John Ward in the north of England with marked success. At length those obstinate Manchester police nabbed him again.

He had hidden some loot in a drain on a piece of waste land. The police found it, but left it there as

ground bait, watching the spot from an upper window day and night. Presently Peace came to fetch it. They pounced upon him. There was a wild fight for freedom, but he was overpowered. This resulted in seven years' penal servitude. Later on he did a further term of ten years. These were commuted to shorter dates, but it is sad to think how many years this great genius wasted in jail.

In 1875 his troubles seemed at an end. He had settled at Darnall, near Sheffield, and carried on the trade of a carver and gilder. From this peaceful village he made his raids on the outer world with great success. Here unhappily he made the acquaintance of Mr. Albert Dyson, a civil engineer. He and Mrs. Dyson were very friendly at first. Later on there were differences. Peace resented Dyson's conduct. He threatened and molested the pair, especially the husband. The Dysons moved across country to Banner Cross. Peace continued to molest them and Mr. Dyson took out a summons against him. Peace did not appear. A warrant was issued for his arrest.

It was a most inconvenient moment for Peace to have any truck with magistrates and the police. Even his calm serenity may well have been disturbed by recent events. He had nearly been captured at Whalley Range in August, 1876, when he murdered a policeman. In November he had sat in the gallery of the Manchester Assize Courts listening to the trial of Habron for the very murder. Though the conviction secured his own safety, yet it was exasperating to his sense of citizenship to sit silently watching a police blunder that he could not repair.

With his mind full of these worries he posts from Manchester direct to Banner Cross. He must see

Mrs. Dyson that night. It is essential that the Dysons should withdraw the warrant. There is a light in the lower room. He gives a low whistle. Mrs. Dyson comes out at the back with a lantern and finds him in the yard. He opens the subject of the warrant. Mrs. Dyson is noisy and threatening. He pulls out his revolver. She screams in fright. Dyson rushes out to his wife's assistance. He sees a figure retreating in the darkness. Dyson follows to seize the man. At the yard door Peace turns round and fires. The bullet thuds against the wall. A second shot hits Dyson in the temple and he falls mortally wounded at his wife's feet. Charles Peace, murderer, flies for his life.

The hue and cry is taken up throughout the country. The wanted man is well known to the police and can be accurately described. Five feet four in height, lacking fingers on his left hand, walking with legs wide apart, speaking as though his tongue was too large for his mouth, aged 46, looking ten years older. It would seem that Charles Peace, *alias* Mann, Ward, Parker, etc., ought not to slip through the fingers of the police.

He has many narrow escapes. He bolts direct to his mother at Sheffield. Explains to her that Dyson had a warrant out against him, so he has shot him. The good lady is horrified. Peace changes his clothes, and turning up his greatcoat collar walks boldly into the station and takes a ticket for Hull, where his wife is living. Just as the train draws out Constable Pearson jumps on board. The police are aware that Hannah Ward is running an eating-house at Hull, and Constable Pearson is told off to watch the place. So hunter and hunted, unconscious of each other, whirl through the darkness separated by a few boards.

Peace goes to the little restaurant. The faithful Hannah gives him a bowl of soup. The intelligent officer, having first reported at the police-station according to rules, makes his way thither. His heavy tread in the outer room catches the burglar's ear. He vanishes silently. The woman can give the officer no news of Charles. The officer ransacks the house. He does not wander through the garret window and search among the tiles. Perhaps had he done so he would have had to be removed like that obstinate Manchester policeman.

The next day Pearce shaves off his beard and whiskers. His facial expression he could always alter in a marvellous manner. He supplies his need for money by an office burglary and lives in lodgings near the police-station. Once forgive him the supreme folly of murdering Dyson and one must admire the sweet simplicity of his methods of evading the police. At times he travels about England, no doubt supplying his needs on the road. He is in London, Bristol, Oxford, Derby, a man with a hundred pounds on his head, well known to the police.

But he enjoys his trips. He travels on one occasion with a policeman going to the assizes at Stafford. He makes up a new face and chats pleasantly to him on professional affairs. He does not even put a glove over his maimed hand. "A policeman always goes by the face. He never thinks of looking at people's hands." That is one of his observant truths. Only a clever man would have discovered this, and only a really great man would have known that a maimed hand is less conspicuous than the constant use of a padded glove.

His wanderings continue. Had he been content to live alone and settle down by himself he might

perhaps have carried on for many years. But Charles Peace was but human after all. He loved domestic life. The cat on the rug by the parlour fire, the dogs by his arm-chair and a harmonium on which to play his favourite Moody and Sankey hymns of an evening, ere it was time to set out beneath the summer stars for the night's work. These have been his dreams and ambitions in the long hours of his captivity, and now that the hue and cry is dying down he will realise them.

It was at Nottingham that he met Susan Grey and succumbed to the spell of her fair hair and brown eyes. She seemed the very woman of his dreams to cheer his domestic life and greet him with a jocund smile in the early morning when he returned tired and soiled from the exploits of the night. Boldly and without ceremony they start life as Mr. and Mrs. Thompson. Later on good Hannah Ward joins this primitive household. The southern suburbs of London are chosen as a safe and pleasant base in which to combine the simple life and great adventures.

2. THE LAST PHASE

Lord Rosebery in his essay on Napoleon says: "A sure test of great men of action is the absence of lukewarmness with regard to them." How true this is of Charles Peace. At his decease *The Times* in no tepid terms denounces his career in a leading article as "a miserable and barren failure." You may say the same of Napoleon. The wise man in the street says to himself: "Can any life be really a failure which compels a whole leading article in *The Times* by way of funeral oration?" These tributes are only for the great.

We find jailers, hangmen, lawyers, the police

themselves testifying to his qualities, proud to have known him. The common people have long ago accepted him with all his surrounding legendary exploits as the Master Criminal. In these last months of his life he was more wonderful than ever. His biographer rightly says: "From May, 1877, to October, 1878, was the most fascinating period of Charles Peace's career." In the fleeting days of those sixteen happy months what strange comedies are played out with deft skill before the final tragedy brings down the curtain.

How entirely great was the choice of Peckham as a safe ambush. I walk down Evelina Road and raise my hat as I pass 5 East Terrace. Not only did he introduce into that respectable locality his newly found lady, Susan Grey, but he persuaded his first wife to join them, and his stepson, Ward. Mrs. Ward was used to his methods of disposal and in this branch of the trade no doubt could educate Susan. They were a happy and united family, Peace passing among his neighbours as a kindly old fellow devoted to his pets, especially his famous pony, Tommy, who would at word of command lie down and die for his master and do many other strange tricks. The house was luxuriously furnished, and his concerts, tea parties and social gatherings of a domestic and respectable nature were the pride of the neighbourhood.

Dear old "Mr. Thompson"—his Peckham *alias*—was an eccentric, amiable elderly fellow. He and the unsuspecting Mr. Brion, his next-door neighbour, were engaged in working out several ingenious patents, which were taken out in their joint names. The old fellow, being a bit of an invalid, kept his bed until midday. Later on he would be experimenting in an outhouse workshop, with the

patents of course, but there was a crucible found afterwards very handy for melting silver. Then came a visit to a neighbouring tavern. Mr. Thompson never had but one drink, though he would stand many rounds, being a generous open-hearted old boy, as Peckham saw him. A quiet evening with the harmonium, over his favourite Moody and Sankey hymns, or a tune on one of his many violins—he collected fiddles from the houses he visited—and then early to bed. The tea parties broke up at eight. Mrs. Thompson (Susan Grey) always said her dear husband was getting on and needed rest. No doubt he did.

But for the really great man there is no rest, nor is there any final goal or last rung to the ladder. It is always onward and upward until the crash comes, and the envious small-minded self-righteous who cannot appreciate the real greatness of a hero, rush in upon him to destroy him, and Cæsar is no more.

Many were the narrow escapes that Peace encountered, but he seemed to live a charmed life. Once he was nearly captured by a butler. Think of the irony of it! The hero destroyed by a flunkey! It was in this way. He had entered a West End house to “work” a safe. He left his boots downstairs, ascended to the sitting-room on the second floor where his work waited him. His first care was to survey exits in case of surprise. It was a house of atrocious construction. There was no way out by the second-floor window, which looked out on to the glass roof of a ground-floor conservatory. Nevertheless, the task must be done. He turns to the safe, and in the midst of his work is interrupted by a butler, a big hefty fellow, more than a match for him. Another servant stands at

the door. There is no time for consideration. The last chance is to leap from the window. It is done in a second, and a sound of broken glass is heard "off." "That's done for him," said the butler in tones of regret. "Poor fellow, he won't want no police now to take him away."

But when they went to find the corpse and survey the damage the man was gone. He vanished, leaving no trail of blood, though badly injured. Was the faithful Tommy with his gig waiting in the wings when he made this sensational exit? No one knows. Only we learn that Mr. Thompson returned home to Peckham with an injured leg and kept his bed for some days.

There were many fine adventures, such as the Melton Mowbray jewel robbery and the Southampton safe case, for Mr. Thompson often travelled far in search of business. But he was always alone on these voyages. The south of London was worked by Tommy and himself. In all these great deeds he had no pal or confederate but Tommy.

I think these last months were pleasant months to Charles Peace. He had great prosperity, not only in big ventures but in more commonplace transactions with furniture and pianos, for we find that he left several uninhabited houses stored with the proceeds of his raids. His joy of life manifested itself in a sense of humour which developed during these last days, for I can find no trace of it in his earlier life. There was policy in his humour. He was of the school of Bismarck who said that the one thing fools would never believe was the truth.

He would enter the Peckham chemist's smoking a big cigar.

"Nice cigar that, Mr. Thompson."

"Yes," replies Peace, smiling.

“Where did you get it?”

“I stole it.”

The chemist laughed. “Dear Mr. Thompson will have his jest. Stolen,” he said, chuckling to himself. “I wish you’d steal a few for me.”

“Certainly,” replied Peace, with a wink. “Next time I come into the shop you shall have some.” And sure enough, next visit, Peace threw him a box over the counter containing the promised stolen cigars.

I like, too, that anecdote of the little tradesman whom Peace met in the train. The consequential little fellow *would* talk burglary and lay down the law about it to the great man and bored him. It was like a schoolboy meeting Euclid and criticising his views about right angles. Peace posed as a detective and the little man became more reasonable. Peace then explained that as a detective even he could break a safe open without anyone hearing him, and of course he was not as good as the high-class burglar.

The little man was incredulous and frightened. He, too, had a safe and trembled for it. But he was a sportsman and he would like to know the worst. He offered to bet the detective five pounds that he could not do it. The terms were made. Peace took the fellow’s address. It was arranged that the man’s handkerchief should be left in the safe, and he should go to bed in the ordinary way and not stir unless he heard a noise.

That night Peace burgled the safe, took out the handkerchief and closed the safe with a bang. Down came the terrified householder with a candle and a poker. When he saw it was the friendly detective of the morning waving the handkerchief they both laughed aloud. A couple of glasses of

whisky were produced. Peace showed the man how the safe lock was worked, and insisted on paying his fiver, complimenting his host on his good hearing and his bravery. Then he bade him good night. After he had gone the unfortunate tradesman discovered that £150 was missing from the safe, and the bet had been paid by one of his own notes.

One night Mr. Thompson did not come home. He had been working Gifford House, St. John's Park, Blackheath. He had browned his face to disguise himself as a half-caste. All went well at first. The dining-room window yielded to a jemmy, and the silver and plate were placed ready to carry off, when he was disturbed. He made a dash from the window across the lawn. P.C. Robinson was after him. In vain did Peace threaten to use his revolver. P.C. Robinson came to him with that dogged obstinacy that on several occasions had "nettled" the great man. Peace fired three shots without effect. He fired again, and then Sergeant Bacon came to the rescue. Both stooped to their quarry at once, and the great game was over for ever.

At first the police did not know the value of their prize. He was described on October 11th at the Greenwich police-court as "a half-caste who refused his name and address." They had no idea they had captured the renowned Charles Peace. Though his dark skin grew lighter, they seem to have been without suspicion of the truth until, on November 3rd, the unfortunate captive, whose nerve must by now have been severely shaken, wrote a penitent letter to friend Brion, under the name of John Ward, asking him to visit him. By this clue the police were put upon an easy scent, and on November 6th

they were able to announce that Charles Peace was in their hands.

There have been some admirers and friends of the great man who seek to cast a slur upon the faith of Susan Thompson, but for my part I think she acted, as the diplomatists would say, correctly. When her man was captured she and Mrs. Ward sold up everything they could lay hands upon and fled. But this is in accord with all the traditions. When the general is captured or slain the lieutenants are permitted to retreat. There is no real evidence that she gave anything away to the police that they did not know. It was her claim to the £100 reward, after Peace was hanged, that lacked popularity, but I think the great man himself would have chuckled at the idea of her obtaining it. To the last he wrote to poor Susan friendly letters and sent her his dying blessing.

He was tried by Mr. Justice Hawkins for the attempted murder of P.C. Robinson. I pass over his futile canting appeal to the judge. It was unworthy of him and merely bored Mr. Justice Hawkins, who sentenced him to penal servitude for life in as few words as possible. It seemed as though his first glimpse of death, disgrace and the end of all things had broken his spirit. Then he was removed to Sheffield to be tried for the murder of Dyson, and on the threshold of the scaffold, as it were, Charles Peace was himself again. There was the splendid fight he put up before they could get him into the train at King's Cross; there was his wild ribald conduct on the journey down; and, greatest episode of all, his dive through the window as the train rushed by Darnall, his old home. How the officers clung to his boot. How he fought and wriggled as the train dashed along, and how finally

his manacled and mangled body twisted itself out of their hands and fell lifeless on the permanent way—is not this story a household melodrama which will recur through the ages to rejoice new generations of youthful readers?

The world is startled for the space of an evening edition by the headlines, "Escape of Charles Peace," but alas! it is but a minute's thrill. They walk back upon the line, gather up the hero in blankets and carry him to jail. In his pocket they find a paper, pin pricked in jail, where he had thought out his last escapade.

"Bury me at Darnall
God bless you all
Charles Peace."

He had willed for himself a more thrilling last scene than the ancient inevitable scaffold. But to the only end consonant with his life he comes at last. His trial is short, the result certain. He hears the sentence of death unmoved, bows to his counsel, Frank Lockwood, from the dock, and departs. Now he has made his confession and his will. He, like nearly all the great heroes of Tyburn, is satisfied and content in self-righteousness and forgives his enemies and sends his blessing to his friends. Then, in Armley Jail, on February 25th, 1879, on a snowy frosty morning, with buoyant step he walks out of his cell with his old acquaintance, Marwood, behind him, and makes a last appearance in public worthy of his heroic career.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCERNING MORE MELODRAMAS

1. DR. BURDELL. 2. THE DRUCE CASE.
3. THE MYSTERY OF MERSTHAM TUNNEL.
4. DR. SMETHURST. 5. A BABY WITHOUT A NAME

JEREMY COLLIER says that "the business of plays is to recommend Virtue and discountenance Vice; to show the uncertainty of human greatness, the sudden turns of fate and the unhappy conclusions of Violence and injustice. 'Tis to expose the singularities of pride and fancy, to make folly and falsehood contemptible and to bring everything that is ill under infamy and neglect."

Our author then pours out his full wealth of sarcasm, learning and rhetoric on the unhappy playwrights who have offended against his view of the "business of plays," and so convinced am I of the basic sense of his proposition that I feel real regret that it is not possible to send the reverend gentleman a copy of these Dramas of the Law since I feel they would have given him real satisfaction. I now for the first time follow the innate modesty in Walt Whitman's lines :

"I conn'd old times,
I sat studying at the feet of the great masters,
Now if eligible O that the great masters might return and
study me."

For I can see that these legal dramas of mine would

have greatly pleased the devout Jeremy as bearing out in full detail what he demanded of the playwrights, and no chapter would he find more satisfactory than this one devoted to miscellaneous melodramas chosen to exhibit all those qualities which he sets in his forefront as necessary to dramas of right action. Certainly no form of story does more to "recommend Virtue and discountenance Vice" than true records of legal dramas written, as friend Jeremy would have them written, with a "true relish of Decency and Honour."

I. DR. BURDELL

On January 30th, 1857, a murder was committed at 31 Bond Street, New York, which roused the inhabitants of the entire continent to a wild pitch of excitement. In the cars, in the ferry-boats, in every hotel, bar-room or saloon, nay, in every fashionable drawing-room in the city, there was but one topic of discussion and surmise. Who killed Dr. Burdell?

Dr. Hervey Burdell was an eminent dentist, forty-six years of age. The house at 31, Bond Street was his own house. He lived there and had his rooms on the ground floor. The world knew him as a well-educated physician of intelligence, culture and position. He was accounted a man of urbanity and respectability, not unlike the celebrated Dr. Brand Firmin of Old Parr Street. One can picture him with a polished forehead, a flashing eye, a rolling velvet collar and all the smug insignia of professional prosperity.

On the morning of January 31st, when the office boy arrived and entered his room, he found the dead body of the doctor lying on its face close to the door. He brought help. At first it was thought

the doctor had committed suicide, but careful examination revealed the fact that Dr. Burdell had been foully murdered, there being no less than fifteen wounds in his body, made by a dirk or other sharp instrument, any of which might have been fatal.

It was clearly not a case of suicide. The experts reconstructed the murder much in this way. The doctor had been sitting in his large room in the chair at his desk near the gas lamp, which was found fully lighted. He was probably reading. The murderer enters behind him and strikes the first blow through the right shoulder. There are a few drops of blood on the right side of the chair, which followed the steel as it was pulled out. Then a cord or handkerchief is thrown round his neck to strangle him. The doctor rises and makes for the door, struggling. His course is traced by blood along the wall. The murderer flings him down on to the floor near the door and stabs him to death. Then he has to drag the body aside to open the door and depart. But who was the murderer? That was the question that for many months haunted the citizens of New York and cried vainly for an answer.

There is no greater joy to the worldlings of Vanity Fair than when the wall of a neighbour's house is drawn aside and you can peep into the bedrooms and the attics and even see the skeletons hanging behind the wardrobe doors. If ever a house and the secrets of it were made bare to the world it was that unhappy dentist's abode at 31 Bond Street.

It was a curious household. There was Mrs. Emma Augusta Cunningham, supposed to be a widow. She had two daughters, Augusta, about eighteen, and Helen, sixteen, also two little boys, ten and nine. She had lived there some time. She

was a woman of means. She rented a portion of the house from the doctor. He had been a friend of long standing, and on occasion they were seen about together at the Broadway Theatre and elsewhere. Later there had been visiting and staying there, a young woman, recently divorced, Miss Dimis Hubbard, in whom the doctor had taken an interest. Mrs. Cunningham did not approve of her, but she had visited the house up to the day of the murder. There were three men lodgers or boarders: the Hon. Daniel Wilmann, a lawyer of note; John J. Eckel, in the employ of a State Senator; and George V. Snodgrass, a young man about twenty, son of a well-known Presbyterian clergyman, a friend of Mrs. Cunningham and the doctor.

The *ménage* seemed domestic and wholesome enough, but New York became delightedly alive to a scandal when Mrs. Cunningham declared that she was the widow of Dr. Burdell, having been secretly married to him on the 28th October by the Rev. Uriah Marvine, of the Dutch Reformed Church. Police inquiries proved that the relationship between the deceased and Mrs. Cunningham had been peculiar if not altogether without precedent. He had long desired her and had paid court to her soon after her widowhood. Against the advice of her wiser friends she had gone to live at 31, Bond Street. There seems little doubt that whilst there she and the doctor had been intimate. Then came the bland respectable doctor's interest in the young *divorcée*—indeed it was said that he was visited by other young ladies, names unknown—followed by jealousy and indignation on the part of Mrs. Cunningham, who was shocked at the idea of her dear daughters being brought into contact with damsels of light behaviour.

The various quarrels between Mrs. Cunningham and the late model of medical propriety had never reached the ears of society, but they had on occasion got as far as the police-station. It appears she had been at his safe looking for some papers she claimed. He charges her with stealing a promissory note. They go to the station together. Mrs. Cunningham behaves like any other jealous injured woman, and rages round telling the police that as for the doctor "she was his wife by every tie that could be," and that she would have satisfaction of him. The police wash their hands of the matter and Mrs. Cunningham rushes off to her lawyers to start suits for slander and breach of promise.

But all this happened away back in September, and if Mrs. Cunningham and her daughter spoke the truth the marriage took place at the end of October. The suits were certainly discontinued, and among the doctor's own papers is a written statement by him to the effect that the litigation being over he agrees "to extend to herself and her family my friendship through life."

There are many ways of unravelling a mystery and discovering a crime, but the way *not* to do it is to jump at a conclusion and adopt a theory at the outset and endeavour to find facts to justify your wisdom. Yet this is the commonest blunder even among those whose experience should have taught them better. The facile mind of the particular Dogberry who was at that date coroner of New York City sprang to a conclusion, which the newspaper press of the day dinned into the ears of the public, that Mrs. Cunningham had murdered Dr. Burdell, and that she had been assisted thereto by Eckel, who had supplanted the doctor in her affections. It was the kind of melodrama that a

sordid world craves for, and the coroner set to work to stage it and mount it in lavish detail.

There are over 180 columns of printed evidence at the inquest, much of which is mere gossip and suspicion. The story the coroner had laid down in his scenario was of this sort. Mrs. Cunningham was a wicked adventuress who took rooms in the good doctor's house to entrap him into marriage. Finding this impossible, she induced her paramour, Eckel, to personate Burdell in a sham marriage, with a view of ultimately claiming her dower. Then she persuaded Eckel to help her to murder her victim.

The coroner appears to have been a blustering self-important fellow, and Henry Lauren Clinton, the leader of the American Bar, who defended Mrs. Cunningham, refused to take any part in the proceedings before him.

There was really very little evidence of importance, apart from the folly of Mrs. Cunningham's conduct with the doctor and the suggested motive of jealousy. The Rev. Uriah Marvine did not at first identify the deceased Burdell as the person who had gone through the marriage, and in the end the Surrogate did not admit the marriage, though it had probably taken place. Certainly Eckel had not personated the doctor.

There was no evidence against Eckel except that of a man named Farrell, who turned up late in the proceedings with the remarkable story that on the night of the murder he had sat down on the steps of 31, Bond Street at about 9.30 p.m. to lace up his shoe, and he saw a man pass him and go into the house. Immediately after he heard a cry of murder, and then a man came to the door in his shirt-sleeves and told him to go away. That man was Eckel.

Of course this was very serious, but at the trial the prosecution did not produce the witness, and he was probably a romancer.

Dr. Burdell, known to the world as a brilliant cultivated physician, was in private life a common character. He was quarrelsome and made many enemies. At times he gave way to melancholy and was suspicious of his surroundings. He lived a secret life of his own, and it was alleged that he entertained women in his rooms at night. He dined every day at 5 o'clock at the Metropolitan Hotel, and he was there the evening before the murder. He was last seen alive at the corner of Bond Street about nine or nine-thirty, standing alone as if waiting for someone.

But these details did not seize the public imagination nor were they dwelt upon by the coroner, and in the result Mrs. Cunningham and Eckel were found by the coroner's jury guilty of murder, a verdict which was received with great public applause.

In Clinton Mrs. Cunningham had an acute and fearless advocate. He himself states in an account of the case published as recently as 1897 that he firmly believed in her innocence from first to last. He was impressed by the evidence of her children, which never wavered or altered, and, if true, was conclusive that she could not have been present at the murder. Experiments showed that in the Cunninghams' rooms no shouts or screams from below could be heard, and Clinton convinced himself that no member of the family left their portion of the house between the evening of the 30th and the morning of the 31st. As soon as the inquest was over he made a move to prove the marriage before the Surrogate, and the evidence of the clergy-

man, who was now convinced that the parties he married were the deceased and Mrs. Cunningham, and the evidence of her daughter Augusta and a servant of the clergyman, who were present at the wedding, turned the minds of many of the public towards Mrs. Cunningham.

When the trial came on, the fact that the prosecution no longer put forward Farrell as a witness of truth showed the world and the jury the hollow shifting foundations upon which the coroner had built up his theory of the crime. The summing up of Judge Davies to the jury is a monument of careful reasoning and wise warning, in itself the most eloquent rebuke which could be administered to the coarse and bigoted misconduct of the coroner. After her acquittal the prosecution of Eckel was very properly not proceeded with. But the stupidity and self-conceit of this official had not only imperilled innocent people, it had also stopped the following up of other clues and the prosecution of other inquiries that might have solved the mystery of 31, Bond Street and answered the question that for many years was a matter of public interest.

Who murdered Dr. Burdell? Was it some private enemy, some jealous friend, or some of his lady companions, or some thief who at the last moment was disturbed or grew frightened at what he had done? Such is the strange vanity of criminals that on several occasions in after-years condemned men confessed to the crime with considerable detail, in the morbid hope that after they were executed their names would be associated with so famous a crime. But the authorities non-suited these aspirants to infamous immortality, and the murderer of Dr. Hervey Burdell remains obscure in his anonymity to this day.

2. THE DRUCE CASE

More than fifty years ago I was a constant visitor to the Baker Street Bazaar. At a stall on the right hand as you went in you could purchase a little Chinese cedar-wood box full of coloured chips, which you dropped into a bowl of water and they turned into sweet-scented flowers. That was a real mystery.

I make no doubt that I often saw Thomas Charles Druce, the proprietor of that wonderful emporium, but that he was a bigger mystery than my Chinese flowers never dawned upon me. If I thought about him at all, which I doubt, it was merely as a purveyor of toys, in which capacity I still regard him as a man of uncommon sense and good taste.

To most of his customers Druce appeared to be but a shopkeeper. A super-shopkeeper, if you will, whose name will be written on the roll of fame with Shoolbred, Snelgrove, Maple and the brothers Heal, but still a keeper of a shop and nothing more. Only to a select and chosen few was his secret known, and it was nothing less marvellous and mysterious than this—Thomas Charles Druce was really William John Cavendish Scott Bentinck, 5th Duke of Portland!

When at the beginning of this century George Hollamby Druce, his grandson, unfolded his wonderful chain of evidence and told the Hyde and Jekyll story of his grandfather's career, the world stood amazed but more than half convinced that his claim to the dukedom was a just one. It is a complicated story, and to explain it clearly let us pretend there are two entities posing as one. We will call the proprietor of Baker Street Bazaar "Druce the Duke" and the other fellow "the Welbeck Duke."

Now William John, the Welbeck Duke, was

born in 1800, and he seems to have lived a plain and simple ducal life at home, as far as one knows, until 1816. Then it is said he took to galloping on horseback across country from Welbeck, in Nottinghamshire, to Bury St. Edmunds to pay court to a charming girl of his own age, with several thousand pounds of her own, named Elizabeth Crickmer. But the most ardent lover cannot ride eighty miles a day, week in and week out, and so the Welbeck Duke elopes with his girl lover and marries her at St. James's, Bury St. Edmunds, by licence, on October 19th, 1816, in the name of "Thomas Druce of this parish."

The Welbeck Duke, who at that time was only a cadet and younger son of the noble house, must now have disappeared from his family for some four years. Meanwhile Druce the Duke lives at Bury St. Edmunds with his wife as a shopkeeper of some sort, and has several children, two of whom, George and Frances, play an important part in the story.

In June, 1820, Druce the Duke basely deserts his wife and children, and the Welbeck Duke returns to the dukeries and accepts a commission in the Army and becomes Member for King's Lynn. The children's maternal grandmother is without means, and George is sent to sea and Frances remains with relations at Yarmouth.

For fifteen years Druce the Duke is unheard of. Then, in 1835, when George, his son, comes into Gravesend on his ship, the boy is suddenly sent for, taken off to an outfitter, rigged in new clothes, and carried up to Baker Street Bazaar, and there meets his long-lost parent, who is now a wealthy shopkeeper. He remembers meeting Annie Berkeley at this time, and Druce the Duke tells him she is

an Aunt. George receives some education, remains a sailor and becomes a second mate. On his mother's death, in 1851, he emigrates to Australia. He is the father of George Hollamby Druce, the ultimate claimant, who was born in 1855.

How Druce the Duke dealt with his wife Elizabeth is not clearly stated, but he seems to have supported her in some way after 1835. Frances, his daughter, he places with Mrs. Tremaine, another alleged Aunt. She remembers being brought from Yarmouth in 1836, and finding her long-lost father Druce the Duke, a man of great wealth, with a house in Edgware Road, a residence at Brighton and a country house at Hendon.

The Welbeck Duke was a woman-hater and a recluse, and died unmarried. He avoided society and spent his time busying himself with his hot-houses and green-houses and the wonderful underground buildings at Welbeck. In his early days he was a patron of the turf and it is said that with his winnings Druce the Duke found the £100,000 with which to start the Baker Street business. The idea seems to be that the hermit of Welbeck got weary of his misogynist life and that in reality he was a complete lady-killer, and this side of his character was made manifest in the career of Druce the Duke, who married twice and left many children.

There seems to be no very direct evidence about these things, but then it is all a long time ago. Elizabeth Crickmer, in her old age, used to tell her children that their father "dropped from the clouds" and had no relations, but that seems to fall short of droving that he was a duke.

There was a story of the Welbeck Duke that he had a quarrel with his brother George and struck him a blow in the region of the heart, which killed him.

The dispute arose over a lady named Anne May Berkeley. The Welbeck Duke never forgave himself for injuring his brother, although the doctors seemed clear that the blow was not the direct cause of his death. Druce the Duke, it was alleged, used to say to several persons: "I never intended to kill my brother, I only struck him in self-defence." There seems evidence that both Dukes were obsessed by a fear of arrest and punishment over a similar matter. It was also asserted that Druce the Duke's second wife, whom he married in 1851 and who is described in the certificate as Annie May, is really the Anne May Berkeley about whom the brothers quarrelled. This suggestion entails the proposition that the second Mrs. Druce must have been fifty-six years old when she married, yet had several children afterwards and lived to be over a hundred.

I cannot help thinking that the extraordinary habits of the Welbeck Duke, who came into his dukedom in 1854 and was the centre of many strange legends, made people very ready to credit any new extravagant story about his career. The Welbeck Duke hurried from place to place in a mysterious way. He would order a closed carriage to be left overnight at Welbeck equipped for a journey. The next day, still closed up and secret, it made the voyage to London on a railway truck. Horses met the carriage at the terminus and drove it to Harcourt House. Sometimes the Duke was in it, sometimes he was not.

It was commonly said in after-years that many people knew in his lifetime that Druce the Duke was the real Duke. It was remembered that both men were vegetarians, or nearly so. But photographs show that Druce the Duke was a veritable beaver with an accomplished beard. The Welbeck

Duke had only side-whiskers. Believers, however, pointed out that the hairdresser from Truefitt's visited Harcourt House daily, and that in the picture of Druce the Duke it was obvious his beard was artificial.

The popular belief that there was an underground passage between Harcourt House and the Bazaar, along which the Welbeck Duke made his way to business, was not thought extravagant, in view of the vast tunnelling works at Welbeck itself. For over twenty years the Welbeck Duke had spent £100,000 a year and employed an army of over 1,000 workmen on miles of underground passages and palaces. Nothing seemed impossible to imagine about such a strange eccentric creature.

But, rumours and strange stories apart, the real essence of the ultimate claimant's case was summed up in the answer to the question, did Druce the Duke die in 1864, and was he buried in Highgate Cemetery on December 31st of that year?

The theory of the claimant was that in 1864, Druce the Duke found playing at Hyde and Jekyll was becoming tiresome. He fancied that some of his employees had already guessed his secret. If we can believe some of the witnesses who afterwards were ready to come forward, the secret was at this time fairly common knowledge. Then it must have been impressed upon him what a muddle would ensue if either the Welbeck Duke or Druce the Duke died by accident or otherwise. If Druce the Duke died, then within a few days there would be no Duke of Portland, and if the Welbeck Duke died, there would be no one to run the Baker Street Bazaar. So the claimant conceived that Druce the Duke, at last recognising the inconveniences these things might cause, made up his mind to go into

voluntary liquidation, as it were, and wind himself up as Druce, once and for all, by means of a bogus death and a mock funeral.

There was the usual death certificate, signed by Herbert Druce, his son, who was present at the death, stating that Thomas Charles Druce had died on the 28th December, 1864, aged 70, at Holcombe House, Mill Hill, Hendon. There was, it is true, no doctor's certificate. It was suggested that Druce's second family, or certainly the second wife, knowing all the circumstances, would aid and abet Druce the Duke in disposing of himself in this way, if only for the valuable estate he proposed to leave them.

In after-years the story took a strange shape of some lead being stripped from the roof of the Hendon house to be put in the coffin, and it was stated that many suspicions were rife, and rumours spread abroad at the time, that the burial was a bogus affair. But the most remarkable evidence of all was contained in statements of employees and friends that Druce the Duke was seen on many occasions after his death at the Baker Street Bazaar, and that the manager had openly stated that everyone knew that the business belonged to the Duke of Portland, but that no one was supposed to say anything about it. How the mystery started, who first preached the fantastic creed that these two human beings were one and the same man, and who invented the preposterous story of the bogus funeral and the empty grave at Highgate it is impossible to say. But the story flew from lip to lip, and long before it reached the law courts was credible gossip of the clubs and bar-parlours and street corners, growing in volume and stature every day.

It seems psychologically certain that, once you

begin a story of scandal, mystery or miracle, it spreads like fire or disease through the community until it becomes such a danger centre that it is necessary to take measures to stamp it out and put an end to what has become a public nuisance. It is curious, too, how these legends absorb the thoughts of the feeble-minded until, like little children, they begin to imagine themselves persons in the play, with real parts to enact, real memories to relate, and their vanity, conceit and low moral fibre lead them as far as serious perjury and crime, in an endeavour to pose as a character in the legal drama.

Professor Swift tells us that "one of the causes of unintentional perversion of memory is the constant talk that an exciting occurrence produces," and this is well exhibited in the story of the Druce case, which at the end of last century strangely occupied the minds of the idle and curious. All sorts of absurd legends were told of the Duke occasionally haunting the Baker Street Bazaar, of employees who could and they would unfold strange tales of funeral men who knew the truth about the Highgate grave. Round this shrine the legends of Marylebone wove a thick veil of romance. Visitors looked at it with awe. For beneath these formal stones lay the answer to a mysterious riddle. Scoffers might smile and speak sneeringly of the idle tales that passed for testimony, but the man in the street had got seisin of a mystery and hugged it to his ample heart.

And when the claimants came forward everyone felt there was one witness to be called, if you could subpoena him, who would, with the accompanying affidavits and recollections of ancient denizens of Baker Street and elsewhere, practically settle the question for ever. The witness that was wanted

was the owner and occupier of the grave in the Highgate Cemetery. If there was a body of a man in the grave, and especially if the body was shown to be wearing a beard, then beyond all doubt the story of Druce the Duke was a myth, and George Hollamby Druce and his advisers admitted as much. If, however, there was, as was alleged, only a lump of lead in the coffin, then undoubtedly it went far to furnish proof of one of the weirdest and strangest stories of a double life that was ever brought into a Court of Justice.

The first claimant to come forward was Mrs. Anna Maria Druce, widow of Walter Thomas Druce, son of the late Thomas Charles, who had by 1898 heard the strange rumour that her father-in-law was not, as his tomb-stone asserted, sleeping in Highgate Cemetery, but that all that had been placed in his coffin was a lump of lead.

If this were really so, it was clearly her duty to her little son to have the matter thrashed out, as the truth or falsehood of it involved his inheritance from his grandfather. The strange story, therefore, was brought before Dr. Tristram, Chancellor of the diocese of London, who, sitting in the Consistory Court at St. Paul's Cathedral, granted her a faculty to open the grave and ascertain the truth of the matter. But solicitors now intervened on behalf of another brother and of an executor. They entered a caveat, as their clients objected to the old man's remains being disturbed. There were marches and counter-marches from Consistory Court to Probate Court and thence to Court of Appeal and back again. Some judges thought one thing, others differed with great learning, but the widow was nearing success when the cemetery company joined in the fray.

Their view was that it might injure trade and annoy their customers if this sort of thing became common. They applied to the King's Bench for protection, and the judges of that court decided that a Consistory Court has no jurisdiction to order the disinterment of a body or interfere with the business affairs of a cemetery company. Mrs. Druce gained nothing by her litigation, and Thomas Charles or the lump of lead, whichever it was, was allowed to rest in peace in Highgate Cemetery.

The general public were not at all interested in cemetery amenities. They wanted a solution of the mystery they had invented and worshipped. If Druce of Baker Street was not Druce at all and never died and was not buried, who was he and why did it all happen?

Mrs. Druce's answer to that question was that Druce was, in fact, the 5th Duke of Portland. Her evidence was certainly remarkable. Some able editors, like the late Sir Arthur Pearson, were convinced that her story was true. Others regarded her testimony as a farrago of midsummer madness. Popular opinion chivalrously sided with the lady, and when the cemetery company balked the mob of its ghoulis pleasure of searching the Highgate grave there was much disappointment and regret.

But the drama was not ended. In 1905 a new claimant from Australia appeared in George Hollamby Druce, a grandson of Thomas Charles Druce by his first wife. Not only did he claim to share in the estate, but if he could have established his claim there is no doubt that he was the rightful Duke of Portland. When it was heard that his case was to come before the courts everybody once again was heard discussing the possibilities and improbabilities of the mystery of Mr. Druce.

The mainstay of the litigation of 1898 and of this new claimant was Mrs. Margaret Jane Louise Hamilton, an old lady who said she had known the Duke of Portland from very early days. Her father had been a great friend of the Duke and knew all about his double life, and she gave many details of her own first-hand knowledge of the affair. The most remarkable statement she made was that Druce told her himself before his alleged death, "I am going to die; I am going to do away with Druce," and her father had said to her that Druce was at Baker Street on the very day of his mock funeral.

The Claimant had put forward his case and printed some of his evidence before the matter came into court. He was not a man of means, and he received a large amount of popular support and monetary assistance. He decided to commence hostilities by prosecuting Herbert Druce for perjury.

In the proceedings in 1898 this gentleman had made an affidavit in which he had detailed his father's last illness and sworn that he had died on December 28th, 1864, between one and two in the morning, that he had seen him placed in his coffin and had carried out the funeral arrangements. The averment was that Druce did not die, that the funeral was a mock one, and that he lived on as the Duke of Portland until 1879.

The case came on for hearing before Mr. Plowden in 1907, and created the greatest excitement. It was known that the Claimant had brought witnesses from America and elsewhere, and it was understood that there was abundant testimony that Druce had been seen since the day of his funeral.

The first witness was Mr. Richard Caldwell, an old gentleman of 71, a retired accountant of Richmond, Virginia. His story was so wildly improbable

that it seemed to some people worthy of belief merely on that account. He told the Court that he had come to England in 1864, and had met Sir Morell Mackenzie, the throat specialist, who was very interested in a cure for nasal disorders which he, Caldwell, had discovered among the gypsies of India. He went on to say that Sir Morell took him down to Welbeck to the Duke of Portland, who was suffering from nasal trouble, and that he had applied his remedies and cured him. For these services he received £5000 and another £5000 by way of presents.

Caldwell said that he had stopped at Welbeck for a couple of months, but a great part of the cure was performed at Baker Street, where the Duke was only known as Mr. Druce. Here he met Annie May, Druce's second wife, and her children. When his friend decided to get rid of his Druce personality Caldwell was chosen to assist him. He it was who found a carpenter to make a box to hold the 200 lbs. of lead which was placed in the coffin. He told the Court all about the mock funeral and the fifty carriages starting from Baker Street, and after the event he had been down at Welbeck again and seen Mrs. Druce there with the Duke.

But the retired accountant and nasal specialist was outrivalled by Mrs. Mary Ann Robinson, a lady about fifty-six, who came over from New Zealand, bringing with her a diary and other papers which were going to establish clearly that Druce and the Duke were one and the same person. This precious diary was unfortunately stolen from her in the City. Her handbag was snatched out of her hand whilst she was looking into a shop window, and the Claimant complained that many of his documents suffered the same fate. It was whispered that the